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ORIENTAL AND LINGUISTIC STUDIES.

FIRST SERIES.

THE VEDA; THE AVESTA; THE SCIENCE OF LANGUAGE.

BY

WILLIAM DWIGHT WHITNEY,

PROFESSOR OF SANSKRIT AND COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY IN YALE COLLEGE.

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To

PROFESSOR EDWARD ELBRIDGE SALISBURY,

THE PIONEER AND PATRON OF SANSKRIT STUDIES IN AMERICA,

THIS VOLUME

IS CORDIALLY INSCRIBED BY HIS FORMER PUPIL.

PREFACE.

It is at the suggestion and by the advice of friends in whose judgment I have more confidence than in my own, that I put forth this volume of collected essays.[1] The subjects of which they treat are now engaging not a little attention from scholars and from men of reading, and, although much written upon, are yet very far from being exhausted. The paper on the Vedas was, so far as I know, the very first in which the main results of modern study respecting the most ancient period in Indian history were made accessible in English. When it was prepared, I had been attending during two seasons upon the lectures and other instructions of Professor Roth, of Tübingen, and, to an extent so considerable that it calls for special acknowledgment here, the exhibition of the subject was a digest of his teachings. It, as well as the essays that follow it, is left in the main as it was originally drawn up; although there are, naturally enough, passages to which, if the essays were to be produced anew, I should give a somewhat different coloring. The Avestan article has been rewritten, especially in its bibliographical portion, so as to be brought down to the present time as regards the notices of European scholars and their works.

The essays bearing upon the science of language will be found, I trust, not less called for than the rest by the circumstances of the time. Notwithstanding all that has

[1] A statement of the places and times of original publication will be found at the end of the volume.

been doing of late for the furtherance of this science, even its fundamental principles are still subjects of the widest difference of opinion, and of lively controversy. In Germany itself, where the methods of comparative philology have received an elaboration and a definite and fruitful application elsewhere unequaled and unapproached, linguistic science remains far behind; opinions are still in a state almost to be termed chaotic, and one comparative philologist of rank and fame after another comes forward with doctrines that are paradoxical or wholly indefensible. My own system of scientific views respecting language was put forth some years ago in a work entitled "Language and the Study of Language" (first edition, New York and London, 1867); in the last few essays of this volume I have endeavored to uphold and urge them, in opposition to the discordant teachings of other scholars. These main truths — that, on the one hand, the capacity of speech is an endowment of human nature, not, however, the only characteristic one, nor a simple one, but the sum and combined effect of qualities which have other and hardly less characteristic modes of exhibition; that every language, on the other hand, is a concrete result of the working out of that capacity, an institution of gradual historic growth, a part of the culture of the race to which it belongs, and handed down by tradition, from teacher to learner, like every other part of culture; and hence, that the study of language is a historical science, to be pursued by historical methods — these truths I have attempted to inculcate, persuaded that there is no other sound and defensible basis for linguistic science.

I have not thought it worth while so to recast the different essays as to take away the special style which the circumstances of first publication impressed on them. A little repetition will be observed here and there, as the

result of the same circumstances; but not, I believe, in any important degree. I have, of course, allowed myself some omissions and modifications of expression.

If the reception accorded to this volume be sufficiently encouraging, it will perhaps be followed by another, composed of essays on another class of themes.

NEW HAVEN, Conn., *July*, 1872.

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I.

THE VEDAS.

It is a truth now well established, that the Vedas furnish the only sure foundation on which a knowledge of ancient and modern India can be built up. They are therefore at present engrossing the larger share of the attention of those who pursue this branch of Oriental study. Only recently, however, has their paramount importance been fully recognized; it was by slow degrees that they made their way up to the consideration in which they are now held. Once it was questioned whether any such books as the Vedas really existed, or whether, if they did exist, the jealous care of the Brahmans would ever allow them to be laid open to European eyes. This doubt dispelled, they were first introduced to the near acquaintance of scholars in the West by Colebrooke. His famous essay "On the Vedas" appeared in the "Asiatic Researches" for 1805 (vol. viii.),[1] and, owing to his very extensive library of manuscripts, and that rare command of the language which he possessed, and which enabled him to make a more or less thorough examination of nearly all of them, it presented such a general view of the whole body of Vedic literature as has not even yet been superseded. His comprehension of the subject, however, was in some respects defective. He failed to view in their true mutual relation

[1] And was republished as the first article in his collected Essays. A new edition of the latter (which had long been out of print) is about appearing in London, the Veda essay fully annotated by the author of this volume.

the four original texts and the liturgical and other works which had grouped themselves about them; and, having looked at the contents of the former through the distorting medium of the native interpretation, he did not fully realize what striking results for every department of Indian antiquity they were in condition to furnish. Accordingly, his paper, instead of winding up with an exhortation to pursue diligently the path he had pointed out, and a promise of the abundant fruit to be gained by the conquest of the many difficulties that lay in the way, closed with the rather discouraging remark that the Vedas contained much that was interesting, and were well worthy the occasional attention of the Oriental student, but that their mass, and the obscure dialect in which they were composed, would probably long prevent the mastery of their contents. This prophecy was doubtless in some measure the cause of its own fulfillment; at any rate, many years did elapse before the next step was taken; and this time it was a German, Friedrich Rosen, Professor in the London University, who laid his hand anew to the work: his access to the great collection of Sanskrit manuscripts deposited in London had given him opportunity to learn the true value of the Vedas, and to perceive the high necessity of laying them open to the examination of European science. His "Rig-Vedæ Specimen" saw the light in 1830, and was followed, eight years later, by the publication of the first Ashtaka, or eighth, of the same Veda: the Sanskrit text, accompanied by a Latin translation and notes; the latter incomplete, for he who should have finished them was already in his grave — a fatal interruption to the progress of this study, which had been recommenced so promisingly. For there was no one to take up again the thread where he had dropped it; and so another intermission of some years followed, during which the material already made public was elaborated more by the linguists than by the students of Indian antiquity: for the latter, it was still too

much a fragment to afford any satisfactory results. The next publication of importance was Roth's "Contributions to the History and Literature of the Veda;" it appeared in 1846. Roth had spent some time at the French and English libraries, in a thorough examination, particularly, of the principal Veda, the Rik; and this little work of his, with other similar essays which accompanied or followed it, gave, perhaps, the most powerful impulse to that movement which has since carried all Sanskritists irresistibly to the study of the Vedas. About this time, too, a valuable collection of manuscripts had been purchased for the Royal Library in Berlin; and, with the material thus placed within the easier reach of German science and industry, the work went on more rapidly. Weber's "Vâjasaneyi-Sanhitæ Specimen" appeared in 1845, soon followed by the commencement of an edition of the text of that Veda (the White Yajus).[1] In 1848, Benfey published the Sâma-Veda entire, with translation and glossary. A new edition of the Rik, too, with accented text and the native commentary, is now in progress at London.[2] The Atharva-Veda, the most comprehensive and valuable of the four collections, next after the Rik, still lies buried in the manuscripts.[3] The whole study, then, being still so new, its material in so small part, and that so lately, made public, it is evident that only those who have long had access to libraries of manuscripts, and have devoted to the subject their special attention, can speak with authority, and from the results of original investigation, upon matters connected with the Vedas. Completeness, therefore, in any respect, is not pretended to here. It is

[1] Of this (quarto) edition of the White Yajur-Veda, the principal text was completed in 1852, the Brâhmana in 1855, the Sûtras in 1859.

[2] Namely, under the editorship of Max Müller. Its fourth volume was published in 1862: the two that remain are promised soon to appear. There is a transliterated edition, by Aufrecht, of the whole Rig-Veda (Berlin, 1861–63).

[3] The Atharvan text was published a few years later by the writer, in conjunction with Professor Roth (Berlin, 1856).

sought only to give such a general statement of the main results of the recent Vedic researches as shall serve to introduce the subject to those to whom it may be unknown, and shall help awaken for it that interest to which it is justly entitled.

It will be in order first to name and describe the writings which are to be understood by the appellation *Veda* in the course of this paper. The word is one of varied application. Its original signification is simply 'knowledge, science.' It is then made to denote the whole body of the Hindu sacred literature, as containing eminently *the* science; as teaching that knowledge which, of all others, is best worth acquiring. This is not the sense in which it will be now employed. A discussion of this immense body of literary records, which extends itself over the whole religious and philosophical history of the Hindu people, is not what is here called for. We shall concern ourselves with but a single department of it. It is, namely, by the Indians themselves, divided into two grand portions, *mantra* and *brâhmana* (which words we may render, though not literally, by the terms 'worship' and 'theology'); and this division, as is not always the case with one of native origin, is in fact an essential one, separating two widely different classes of writings, which stand related to one another as canonized text on the one hand, and canonized explication, dogmatical, exegetical, historical, prescriptive, on the other; which, in the main, are widely removed in time, and represent two distinct periods of religious development; and of which the one is in verse, the other in prose. The latter, the *brâhmana*, is made up of the various single works which also bear the name of *brâhmana* (as the Aitareya and Kaushîtaki Brâhmanas, which attach themselves to the Rig-Veda; the Çatapatha Brâhmana, belonging to the Yajus, etc.), and other kindred writings, such as the Aranyakas, works prepared for the edification of those who had withdrawn themselves into

the forest for seclusion and meditation, and Upanishads, lesser theological treatises. The first portion, *mantra*, consists of the four works commonly known as Rig-Veda, Sâma-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Atharva-Veda; and to these alone — the Vedas, in contradistinction to the Veda — will our attention at present be directed. They form together a peculiar class of writings, standing at the head of the whole body of Indian literature, agreeing with one another in the grand external characteristics of form and language, and in the general nature of their contents, and even all of them composed, in part, of the same matter; in other respects, such as internal arrangement, date and object of collection, and use in the ceremonial of the Indian religion, of a widely different character. Those features which are common to them all will naturally be the first to be illustrated.

The general form of the Vedas is that of lyrical poetry. They contain the songs in which the first ancestors of the Hindu people, at the very dawn of their existence as a separate nation, while they were still only on the threshold of the great country which they were afterwards to fill with their civilization, praised the gods, extolled heroic deeds, and sang of other matters which kindled their poetical fervor. This of itself would be enough to attach a high and universal interest to these books — that, as in point of time they are probably the most ancient existing literary records of our race, so, at any rate, in the progression of literary development, they are beyond dispute the earliest we possess, the most complete representation which has been preserved to modern times of that primitive lyrical epoch which theory assumes as the earliest in the literary history of every people. The mass as it lies before us is almost exclusively of a religious character; this may have its ground partly in the end for which the collections were afterward made, but is probably in a far higher degree due to the character of the people itself, which thus

shows itself to have been at the beginning what it continued to be throughout its whole history, an essentially religious one. For no great people, surely, ever presented the spectacle of a development more predominantly religious; none ever grounded its whole fabric of social and political life more absolutely on a religious basis; none ever meditated more deeply and exclusively on things supernatural; none ever rose, on the one hand, higher into the airy regions of a purely speculative creed, or sank, on the other, deeper into degrading superstitions — the two extremes to which such a tendency naturally leads. Hymns of a very different character are not entirely wanting, and this might be taken as an indication that, had they been more numerous, more would have been preserved to us; such, however, form but rare exceptions in the great body of religious poetry. Even passages which afford historical or geographical data are infrequent, and notwithstanding the great mass of the text, the harvest of such information to be gleaned from it is but a scanty one. The songs are for the most part simple invocations and glorifications of the divinity to which each is addressed. The character of the Vedic religion is too little mythical to afford opportunity for extensive variations of the theme which each god suggests, and high flights of pure poetical fancy are of uncommon occurrence; the attributes of the divinity are recounted; honorific epithets in profusion are heaped upon him; the devotion and service of his worshipper are pleaded, and blessings of all kinds besought in return; former kindnesses bestowed on ancestors, or friends, or the heroes of the olden time, are mentioned, and confidence expressed that favors not inferior will still be granted to the righteous. Something of monotony, of course, cannot well be avoided, and proper poetical interest of the highest order is not to be sought here. The metrical form of these lyrics is of the simplest character. Nearly all the metres are variations of but a single movement, the iambic, differ-

ing from one another either in respect to the number of feet which go to make up a hemistich, and the number of the latter which compose a verse, or in the presence or absence of an added syllable which gives each hemistich a trochaic close. But farther than this, the laws regulating the succession of long and short syllables within the limits of the hemistich are in general anything but strict; all that is aimed at seems to be to give the whole a kind of rhythmical flow, or general metrical movement, on which the four last syllables shall stamp the peculiar character; their quantity is much more definitely established, yet even among them exceptional irregularities are by no means rare.

The language of the Vedas is an older dialect, varying very considerably, both in its grammatical and lexical character, from the classical Sanskrit. Its grammatical peculiarities run through all departments: euphonic rules, word-formation and composition, declension, conjugation, syntax. Without entering into any specification of them, which would extend this paper beyond its proper limits, it will be enough to say here that they are partly such as characterize an older language, consisting in a greater originality of forms, and partly such as characterize a language which is still in the bloom and vigor of life, its freedom untrammeled by other rules than those of common usage, and which has not, like the Sanskrit, passed into oblivion as a vernacular dialect, become merely a conventional medium of communication among the learned, been forced, as it were, into a mould of regularity by long and exhaustive grammatical treatment, and received a development which is in some respects foreign and unnatural. The dissimilarity existing between the two in respect to the stock of words of which each is made up is, to say the least, not less marked. Not single words alone, but whole classes of derivatives and roots with the families that are formed from them, which the Veda exhibits in frequent

and familiar use, are wholly wanting, or have left but faint traces, in the classical dialect; and this to such an extent as seems to demand, if the two be actually related to one another directly as mother and daughter, a longer interval between them than we should be inclined to assume from the character and degree of their grammatical, and more especially of their phonetic differences. The history of the Hindu dialects and their mutual relations, however, is as yet far from being satisfactorily traced out, and it is not worth while to risk here any hasty conclusions; at any rate, the value of the Vedic dialect for clearing up this history, and establishing the true character of the Sanskrit and its successors, is not less decided than that of the Vedas themselves for elucidating the later Indian antiquity. In many of the points in which Vedic and Sanskrit disagree, the former strikingly approaches its next neighbors to the westward, the language of the Avesta, commonly called the Zend, and that of the Persian inscriptions; and this circumstance lends it a high importance as an aid in the restoration, now so happily in process of accomplishment, of those lost treasures of antiquity. Its further preëminent value in a general linguistic point of view, as sustaining in a less degree to the Sanskrit the same relation as the latter to the other Indo-European languages, has long been fully recognized.

Other particular characteristics of the four Vedas, and the relations in which they stand to one another, will be most clearly exhibited by giving some account of the contents and arrangement of each separately.

First among them, in extent and importance, is the Rig-Veda. Its text, *sanhitâ*, is composed of a little more than a thousand hymns, *sûktas;* these are of various length, from one to more than fifty verses, and comprise altogether about ten thousand five hundred such verses, or *ric* (*ric* comes from the root *ric* or *arc* 'praise,' and signifies originally 'a praising,' but is then, by an easy

transition, applied to denote the medium of praise, the stanza). From the latter it derives its name: it is the Veda of *ric*.[1] Why it, as distinguished from the others, has a peculiar title to this appellation, will be made to appear hereafter. It is divided into ten books, called *mandalas*, 'circles.' Of these, the first seven are quite homogeneous in respect to their character and internal arrangement. The first book is considerably the longest, containing a hundred and ninety-one hymns, which are, with single scattered exceptions, ascribed to fifteen different authors or *rishis* (this is the technical name for the inspired author of any hymn; the word may be rendered 'sage, seer'), among them some of the best known names of the Vedic period, as Gotama, Kanva, Kutsa, Çunahçepa, Kakshîvan: the hymns of each *rishi* stand together in a body, and, with the exception of those of Agastya, the last in the book, are so arranged that those addressed to Agni come first, those to Indra succeed them, and then follow promiscuously those to other divinities. Of the next six books, each is ascribed entire to a single poet, or poetic family; the second, containing forty-three hymns, to Gritsamada; the third, sixty-two, to Viçvâmitra; the fourth, fifty-eight, to Vâmadeva; the fifth, eighty-seven, to Atri and poets of his kindred; the sixth, seventy-five, to Bharadvâja; the seventh, one hundred and four, to Vasishtha. In all of them, the hymns are arranged in strict accordance with the method above stated as observed in the subdivisions of the first book. Thus far, then, we seem to have a single collection, made and ordered by the same hand. With the succeeding books the case is otherwise. The eighth contains ninety-two hymns, assigned to a great number of different authors, some of whom are among those whose productions we have already found in

[1] Pronounce *c* like *ch* in *church*. It is in accordance with the peculiar rules of Sanskrit euphony that the stem *ric* (more properly *rc*) becomes *rik* when standing by itself, and *rig* before a sonant letter, like *v*.

the earlier books; a majority of them are of the race of Kanva; hymns of the same author do not always stand together, and of any internal arrangement according to divinities there is no trace. This book has a special name; it is entitled *pragâthâs*; the word etymologically signifies a kind of song (from the root *gâ*, 'sing'). Why the hymns of this book in particular should be thus styled, does not clearly appear; *pragâtha* is also the name of a certain metre of not infrequent occurrence among them, as well as of a poet to whom a few of them are ascribed; but neither of these circumstances gives a satisfactory clew to the reason of the appellation. With the ninth book the case is clearer: its hymns, one hundred and fourteen in number, are, without exception, addressed to the Soma, and, being intended to be sung while that drink was expressed from the plant that afforded it, and was clarified, are called *pâvamânyas*, 'purificational.' And here, for the sake of clearness, it may be well to turn aside for a moment to consider the origin and significance of that peculiar feature of the ancient Indian religion presented in the Soma-ritual. The word *soma* means simply 'extract' (from the root *su*, 'express, extract'), and is the name of a beverage prepared from a certain herb, the *asclepias acida*, which grows abundantly upon the mountains of India and Persia. This plant, which by its name should be akin to our common milkweed, furnishes like the latter an abundant milky juice, which, when fermented, possesses intoxicating qualities. In this circumstance, it is believed, lies the explanation of the whole matter. The simple-minded Aryan people, whose whole religion was a worship of the wonderful powers and phenomena of nature, had no sooner perceived that this liquid had power to elevate the spirits and produce a temporary frenzy, under the influence of which the individual was prompted to, and capable of, deeds beyond his natural powers, than they found in it something divine: it was to

their apprehension a god, endowing those into whom it entered with godlike powers; the plant which afforded it became to them the king of plants; the process of preparing it was a holy sacrifice; the instruments used therefor were sacred. The high antiquity of this cultus is attested by the references to it found occurring in the Persian Avesta; it seems, however, to have received a new impulse on Indian territory, as the *pâvamânî* hymns of the Veda exhibit it in a truly remarkable state of development. Soma is there addressed as a god in the highest strains of adulation and veneration; all powers belong to him; all blessings are besought of him, as his to bestow. And not only do such hymns compose one whole book of the Rik, and occur scattered here and there through other portions of it, but the most numerous single passages, and references everywhere appearing, show how closely it had intertwined itself with the whole ritual of the Vedic religion. Soma is an acceptable offering to all the gods; it is, however, peculiarly the property of Indra: he sallies out to slay the demon and free the imprisoned waters, when inspired by the draughts of this drink which are presented him by his worshippers. The transference of the name Soma to the moon, which appears in the later history of the Indian religion, is hitherto obscure; the Vedas hardly know it, nor do they seem to prepare the way for it in any manner.

To return to the ninth book of the Rik: the names of its numerous authors are some of them those whose acquaintance we have already formed; a few of its hymns, as also of the *pragâthas*, are ascribed to mythical personages. Both the eighth and the ninth book, now, stand in a peculiar connection with the Sâma-Veda; nearly half the verses of the *pâvamânyas* occur again in that collection, and of the *pragâthas* more than a fifth, or nearly two thirds as many verses as from all the other books of the Rik (excepting the ninth) taken together. This is a

significant circumstance, from which may one day be drawn valuable results for the history of both collections: for the present we must be content with simply stating it. The tenth book, again, stands apart from the rest, wearing the appearance of being a later appendage to the collection. It is a very long one, comprising, like the first, a hundred and ninety-one hymns. Of these, the first half is arranged upon no apparent system; the second commences with the longer hymns and diminishes their length regularly to the close. As to their authors, the tradition is in very many cases entirely at fault, and either assigns them to some god or mythical character, or awkwardly manufactures out of an expression occurring in one of the verses a name to stand as that of *rishi*. Both these are distinctive circumstances; still more peculiar, however, is the character of a large portion of the contents. Many of the hymns, indeed, do not remarkably differ from the mass of those found in the earlier books; but as a whole they are evidently of a much later date, and conceived in another spirit. They do not restrict themselves to the devotional strain that prevails elsewhere; they embrace a far wider range of subjects: they are mythical, like the hymn of Purûravas and Urvaçî, the dialogue between Yama and Yamî, the discussion between Agni and the other gods, when he desires to resign his office as mediator, and they dissuade him from it; speculative, as the hymn on the origin of the universe, translated in Colebrooke's Essay; simply poetical, as the addresses to night and to forest-solitude; superstitious, as charms and exorcisms; or of an anomalous character, as the hymn in which a ruined gambler deplores his fatal passion for play, recounts the misfortunes which it has caused him, and forswears the dice. They wear, in short, the peculiar character of the fourth Veda, the Atharvan, and do in fact sustain to that collection such a relation as the eighth and ninth books to the Sâma-Veda; a considerable part (nearly a third) of them occurring again among its contents.

After this general view, it will not seem doubtful what opinion is to be held of the character of the Rig-Veda as a collection. Such a mass of hymns could not have been brought together, and into such a form, merely for a liturgical purpose, for use in the ceremonial of the Indian worship. In the later distribution of the Vedas, indeed, to the various classes of priests who officiate at a sacrifice, the Rik is assigned to the *hotar*, or 'invoker;' but this does not suppose of necessity anything further than that this Veda, as the chief of the sacred books, might not be wholly left out at an act of solemn worship; or imply that any other use was made of it than is made of our own Bible, for instance, when at any religious exercise an appropriate chapter or passage from it is read. The Rig-Veda is doubtless a historical collection, prompted by a desire to treasure up complete, and preserve from further corruption, those ancient and inspired songs which the Indian nation had brought with them, as their most precious possession, from the earlier seats of the race.

With the Sâma-Veda the case is otherwise: this is a purely liturgical collection. Its *sanhitâ*, foundation-text, is divided into two portions. The first and smaller, the *ârcika*, is composed of five hundred and eighty-five verses, whereof five hundred and thirty-nine are found likewise in the Rig-Veda; here, however, they are rent from the connection in which they stood in the hymns of which they originally formed a part (so that only in one or two instances do two follow one another in the same order as in the Rik), and are arranged anew into fifty-nine decades, and these again are combined into chapters and books. The first twelve decades are addressed solely to Agni; the thirty-six next following, for the most part, to Indra; single invocations of Agni and other divinities are scattered here and there among them, and a part of one of the last is addressed to Soma. Thus far the verses are taken indifferently from all the books of the Rik except-

ing the ninth (which, save in the decade last mentioned, is represented by only two verses); the extracts from the eighth, however, as already before remarked, greatly preponderating in number. The remaining eleven decades are, without exception, from the Soma-hymns of the ninth book. The second portion, called the *staubhika* (from the root *stubh*, which likewise means 'praise'), contains twelve hundred and twenty-three verses, eleven hundred and ninety-four of them occurring also in the Rig-Veda; they are arranged primarily in divisions which, as a general rule (though with frequent exceptions), consist each of three verses, and are in nearly all cases connected extracts from the hymns of the Rik; sometimes, indeed, a whole hymn, of from four to twelve verses, forms a single division. In numerous instances, the first or one of the following verses of a division is one which has already appeared in the *ârcika*, and is here repeated, accompanied by those others which properly stand in connection with it; the number of such repetitions is so great as to reduce the actual contents of this Veda from 1808 verses to 1549. In the second portion, the extracts from the eighth and ninth books of the Rik bear the same relative proportion to the rest as in the first, but any such internal arrangement of its verses as the latter exhibits is not traceable; invocations of all the divinities occur promiscuously mingled together. The verses which are peculiar to the Sâman present no characteristics to distinguish them from the others; they would appear to belong to hymns which were passed over in making the other collection; a large proportion of them, it may be remarked, are ascribed to Vâmadeva, the author of the fourth book of the Rik. The Sâman is provided with a peculiar and very complicated system of accents, consisting of no less than ten different signs; all of them together, however, express nothing different from what is denoted by the two signs of the other Vedas. Further than this, it presents very numerous readings that

differ more or less from those of the Rik; and these are claimed to be for the most part of a higher antiquity and originality. It thus becomes an important critical aid to the study of the Rik; and in this circumstance, and in the light which its relations to the other collections may be made to shed upon the history of them all, seems to consist for us its chief value. In itself, it is the least interesting of the four Vedas.

The text thus described, however, does not strictly constitute the Sâma-Veda: this, by its name, is a Veda of *sâman*, and as yet we have only *ric*. *Sâman* is a word of not infrequent occurrence in the Vedic texts; its etymology is obscure: that which the Indians themselves give is of no value; its meaning is not a matter of doubt: as distinguished from *ric*, it signifies a musically modulated verse, a chant. These *ric*, then, have to undergo a modification to convert them into *sâman*. And to this end it is not enough that they be simply accompanied with a musical utterance; they are also variously transformed, by the protraction of their vowels, the resolution of semi-vowels into vowels, the insertion of sundry sounds, syllables, and words, the repetition of portions of the verse, and the like. The *ric* thus changed into their *sâma*-form are to be found in the *gânas*, works which form a part of the very extensive literature attached to this Veda. By varying the method of its treatment, each *ric* is of course transformable into an indefinite number of different *sâman*, and this circumstance seems to explain the notices in later Indian works, to the effect that the Sâma-Veda contains four thousand, or even eight thousand *sâman*.

The general object of this collection is understood to have been, that its chants should be sung during the Soma-ritual. Nearer particulars respecting the nature of the connection, the reason of the selection of these verses, the ground of their present arrangement, the method of their application in the ceremonial, it is not at present possible

to give; such matters are reserved for future investigations to elucidate.

The Yajur-Veda, the third of the collections, is of a similar character to the last, being yet more clearly intended to subserve a purely liturgical purpose. It took shape at a period long posterior to that to which is to be assigned the composition of the Vedic hymns, and in connection with, and in consequence of, the development which the cultus, the body of religious ceremonies, received. In the early Vedic times, the sacrifice was still in the main an unfettered act of devotion, not committed to the charge of a body of privileged priests, not regulated in its minor details, but left to the free impulses of him who offered it; accompanied with *ric* and *sâman*, hymns and chants, that the mouth of the offerer might not be silent while his hands were presenting to the divinity the gift which his heart prompted. Thus it is said in a verse of the Sâman, "*ric* and *sâman* we reverence, by whose aid the ceremonies are performed: they two bear rule at the altar; they carry the sacrifice to the gods;" no mention is here made of *yajus*, and the word is very rare in the earlier portions of the Vedic writings. As, however, the ritual, in process of time, assumed a more and more formal character, becoming finally a strictly and minutely regulated succession of single actions, not only were the verses fixed which were to be quoted during the ceremony, but there was established likewise a body of utterances, formulas of words, intended to accompany each individual action of the whole work, to explain, excuse, bless, give symbolical significancy, or the like. To show the minuteness of detail to which this was often carried, it may be mentioned that the first sentences in the text of the White Yajur-Veda were to be uttered by the priest as he cut from a particular tree a switch with which to drive away the calves from the cows whose milk was to furnish the material of the offering. These sacrificial

formulas received the name of *yajus* (from the root *yaj*, 'sacrifice, offer'). A book, then, which should contain the whole body of these expressions, or those of them which were attached to a specified number of ceremonies, would be a Yajur-Veda, Veda of *yajus*. It might contain also many *ric*, which, being connected with certain parts of the ritual as its necessary accompaniments, had themselves become *yajus*. Such is, in fact, the Yajur-Veda which we possess; its text is made up of these formulas, partly in prose and partly in verse, arranged in the order in which they were to be made use of at the sacrifice. Any internal connection, of course, it does not possess; it would be a complete enigma to us, if not explained by a specification of the several actions to which, one after another, the formulas are attached. This explanation is furnished partly by the commentaries on the text, and partly by the Brâhmanas and Sûtras belonging to it. It lies, now, in the nature of the case, that the ceremonial would by no means everywhere be the same in its details; there might be as many distinct Yajur-Vedas collected as there were in different regions various ways of conducting the sacrifice; and it is in accordance with this that we find not one, but two principal texts of the Yajur-Veda, called respectively the White and the Black, or the Vâjasaneyi and Taittirîya Sanhitâs. The origin of these appellations is not clear: the two latter may be patronymics from the families or schools in which the texts first established themselves. Besides the existence of these two independent Sanhitâs, the "schools" of this Veda, whose texts (*çâkhâs*) and their mode of application differ in less important particulars, have been exceedingly numerous. The Black Yajur-Veda or Taittirîya-Sanhitâ is as yet little known, manuscripts of it being very rare in Europe;[1] the other, by the edition and other labors of Dr.

[1] About a third of this text, accompanied with a native commentary, has been printed in Calcutta, in the series of the *Bibliotheca Indica*; and a transliterated

Weber, promises to be sooner and more fully laid open to the knowledge of modern scholars than any of the other Vedas, not excepting the Sâman. It contains about two thousand *yajus*, divided into forty *adhyâyas*, 'lectures;' nearly half of them are in verse, or *ric*, and of these, far the greater portion are to be found also in the Rig-Veda; they present some various readings, yet not nearly so numerous as those of the Sâma-Veda, nor do they possess the same value.

The fourth Veda, the Atharvan, never attained in India the high consideration enjoyed by the other Vedas, or even came to be universally acknowledged as a Veda at all. For us, however, its interest is only second to that of the Rik. Like the latter, it is a historical and not a liturgical collection. It possesses no such characteristic appellation as has been found for each of the other Vedas; it goes by a variety of names, which seem, at least in part, to have been fabricated for the purpose of arrogating to it an antiquity and dignity which it had no fair right to claim. Atharvan and Angiras are half-mythical names of ancient and venerated Indian families, and with these families it is sought to bring the collection into connection by calling it the Veda of the Atharvans and Angirases, or of either alone; and, no one knows how, "Veda of the Atharvans" has finally come to be its most familiar name. It is also often styled *Brahma-Veda*. In this combination, *brahma* unquestionably means 'sacred utterance,' in the peculiar sense of 'charm, incantation;' the word is many times so used in the Veda itself, and in a way that marks it as belonging to a literature like that afterward collected as the Atharvan. But the name is also arbitrarily interpreted as signifying 'Veda of the *brahman*,' or of the supervising and correcting priest in the sacrificial ceremony. That the interpretation is really

edition of the text alone is this year (1872) completed by Weber, in his *Indische Studien*.

a false and artificial one appears clearly from the character of the work designated, which is not in the least such a one as the *brahman* would need to use ; but, the other three Vedas having been assigned to three of the regularly officiating priests — the Rik to the *hotar* or 'invoker,' the Sâman to the *udgâtar* or 'chanter,' the Yajus to the *adhvaryu* or 'offerer' — it would seem to assure to the Atharvan a place in the cultus analogous to that occupied by the rest that its name should be made to imply a belonging to the *brahman*. In extent it stands next to the Rik, comprising nearly six thousand verses, in about seven hundred and thirty hymns, which are divided into twenty books. The first eighteen books, of which alone the collection was at one time composed, are arranged upon a like system throughout ; neither the subject nor the alleged authorship of the hymns, but their length, is the guiding principle ; hymns of about the same number of verses are put together into books, and the books of shorter hymns come first. A sixth of the mass, however (including two whole books), is not metrical, but consists of longer or shorter prose pieces, akin in point of language and style with passages of the Brâhmanas. Of the remainder, or metrical portion, about one sixth is found among the hymns of the Rik, and mostly in its tenth book ; five sixths are peculiar to the Atharvan. Respecting the authorship of the hymns, the tradition has no information of value to give ; they are with few exceptions attributed to mythical personages. The nineteenth book is a kind of supplement to the preceding ones, and is made up of matter of a like nature which had been, perhaps, in part left out when they were compiled, in part since produced. The twentieth and last book, by far the longest of all (it contains about a thousand verses), is still different, being almost altogether made up of actual extracts from the Rik text ; it is a liturgical selection of Rik passages, and the reason of its being appended to the Atharvan is very

obscure. The condition of the text in the nineteenth book, and in the few peculiar hymns of the twentieth, is corrupt to a degree far beyond what is known elsewhere among the Vedas. But in the other books also, the text of those passages which are found in the other Vedas shows various readings which are not seldom unintelligent blunders, and in general clearly betray their more recent date.

As to the internal character of the Atharvan hymns, it may be said of them, as of the tenth book of the Rik, that they are the productions of another and a later period, and the expressions of a different spirit from that of the earlier hymns in the other Veda. In the latter, the gods are approached with reverential awe, indeed, but with love and confidence also — a worship is paid them that exalts the offerer of it; the demons, embraced under the general name *rakshas*, are objects of horror, whom the gods ward off and destroy; the divinities of the Atharvan are regarded rather with a kind of cringing fear, as powers whose wrath is to be deprecated, and whose favor curried for. It knows a whole host of imps and hobgoblins, in ranks and classes, and addresses itself to them directly, offering them homage to induce them to abstain from doing harm. The *mantra*, or prayer, which in the older Veda is the instrument of devotion, is here rather the tool of superstition; it wrings from the unwilling hands of the gods the favors which of old their good-will to men induced them to grant, or by simple magical power it obtains the fulfillment of the utterer's wishes. The most prominent characteristic feature of the Atharvan is the multitude of incantations which it contains; these are pronounced either by the person who is himself to be benefited, or, more often, by the sorcerer for him; and they are directed to the procuring of the greatest variety of desirable ends; most frequently, perhaps, long life, or recovery from grievous sickness, is the object sought; in that case a talisman, such as a necklace, is sometimes

given, or, in numerous instances, some plant endowed with marvelous virtues is to be the immediate external means of the cure; further, the attainment of wealth or power is aimed at, the downfall of enemies, success in love or in play, the removal of petty pests, and so on, even down to the growth of hair on a bald pate. There are hymns, too, in which a single rite or ceremony is taken up and exalted, somewhat in the same strain as the Soma in the *pâvamânî* hymns of the Rik. Others of a speculative mystical character are not wanting; yet their number is not so great as might naturally be expected, considering the development which the Hindu religion received in the periods following that of the primitive Veda. It seems, in the main, that the Atharvan is of popular rather than of priestly origin; that, in making the transition from the Vedic to modern times, it forms an intermediate step rather to the gross idolatries and superstitions of the ignorant mass, than to the sublimated pantheism of the Brahmans.

After this summary view of the single Vedas, it would be in order to consider the general questions of the period of their composition, and their history as collections. But these are still for the most part too obscure to admit of even an approximate solution. That must depend, on the one hand, on a thorough investigation of all the internal evidences to be derived from the texts themselves, which is not practicable until the latter shall have been placed within more general reach; and, on the other hand, on a reduction to chronological order of the present chaos of Indian literature and Indian history, which is a task, the satisfactory accomplishment of which may be even yet far distant. It is perhaps not worth while to attempt fixing the Vedic period more nearly than by saying that general considerations seem to refer it, with much probability, to the earlier half of the second thousand years preceding the Christian era (B. C. 2000–1500). The time which

the hymns themselves cover cannot be measured by less than centuries; and how much later, where, and under whose direction, their collection may have taken place, it is not now possible to determine. At whatever time the work may have been performed, it constituted a decided era in the literary history of India. Thenceforth the texts became a chief object of the science and industry of the nation, as their contents had always attracted its highest reverence and admiration; and so thorough and religious was the care bestowed upon their preservation, that, notwithstanding their mass and the thousands of years which have elapsed since their collection, hardly a single various reading, so far as is yet known, has been suffered to make its way into them after their definite and final establishment. The influence which they have exerted upon the whole literary development of after ages is not easily to be rated too high. Entire classes of writings, forming a very large portion of the Sanskrit literature now in our hands, concern themselves directly with them, and were occasioned by them; and they may even be said, in a sense, to be the direct efficient causes of that whole literature, since it was in the endeavor to restore the knowledge of their antiquated and half-understood dialect that the Indian people came to a consciousness of its own language. Upon the Vedic grammar was founded the Sanskrit grammar, which snatched the language from the influence of further corruption, and fixed it for all future ages as the instrument of learned and elegant composition. Anything like a full consideration here, however, of this highly interesting subject, the direct part which the Vedas have performed in shaping the later Indian history, would lead too far; further discussion of it may be deferred to another opportunity.

It remains, then, to give a comprehensive statement of the main results which the Vedas have hitherto yielded to the history of Indian antiquity. And it may be worth

while, here, to notice precisely in what way they render their assistance. It is, namely, by presenting, not a designed description, but an unconscious picture, of that primitive condition out of which the institutions of following times sprang. In such a picture, particularly as taken from a single point of view, the religious one, there are naturally some points left out which we miss with regret, and others thrown into shadow which we could have wished to see brought out into clear light; yet this is an evil which is lessened by the very considerable extent of the Vedic writings; and further consolation may be found in the consideration that, owing to the lamentable lack of a historic sense which has ever been one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Indian mind, rendering all direct native testimony to a historic fact nearly worthless, only such indirect and unconscious notices could be relied upon as evidence. We are sure that in these texts was deposited a faithful and undistorted, if an imperfect, representation of the relations existing at the time of their composition. Nor, as was shown above, have they been falsified by succeeding generations; however far they may have become removed from the comprehension of the Hindu, beyond full recovery to such efforts as his philology was capable of, however far the development of his civilization may have led him from the condition which they picture, the texts themselves were sacred, not to be altered; it was only allowed to interpretation to distort their meaning into a conformity with the dogmas of later days. It is to be remarked also that, as things are at present situated, the Vedic period itself is more clearly laid open to us than some of those which succeed it, and that many steps in the progress of transition to the conditions of modern times still remain obscure. Such deficiencies we can only hope satisfactorily to make up when the whole Indian literature shall have been more thoroughly investigated: till then we must be content to

theorize across the interval with a probably near approach to truth.

We commence with a view of the geographical and social relations exhibited by these books. It has long been looked upon as settled beyond dispute that the present possessors of India were not the earliest owners of the soil, but, at a time not far beyond the reach of history, had made their way into the peninsula from its northwestern side, over the passes of the Hindu-Koh, through the valley of the Kabul, and across the wastes of the Penjab. And the Vedas show them as still only upon the threshold of their promised land — on the Indus, namely, and the region on either side of it, covering the whole Penjab, extending across the little neck of territory which, watered by the holy Sarasvatî, connects the latter with the great basin of central Hindostan, and touching the borders of this basin on the courses of the upper Yamunâ and Ganges. The Ganges itself is mentioned but once in the whole Rik, and then in a hymn of the tenth book, in which it is called upon to join with all other streams in the exaltation of the Indus, the king of rivers. The latter, *Sindhu*, 'the river (*par excellence*),' with the rivers of the Penjab, is most frequently mentioned; and the region which they embrace is the proper scene in which the action of the Vedas is laid. For this country in general, its inhabitants have no more definite name than *sapta sindhavas*, 'the seven rivers.' It may not be necessary to seek here just so many distinct streams; seven, according to the use of it common in early times, may represent an indefinite number; if we choose, however, the required seven may be readily found in the Indus, its main western tributary, the Kabul, and the five chief streams of the Penjab. This territory is broken up into many petty districts, each shut out from near connection with its neighbors by mountains or wastes. And the political state of the people is such as this natural conforma-

tion of country must condition; they are divided into clans or tribes, independent of one another, save as they are bound together by the consciousness of a common descent, language, and religion, and by their united hostility to the original possessors of the soil on which they now have foothold. As distinguished from these, they entitle themselves Aryans, *ârya* (a word of which the primitive meaning is doubtful and controverted), and call the others *dasyu*, 'enemies, disturbers;' among themselves, their simple appellation is generally *viças*, 'the dwellers, people.' The exact form of their state is not a point which by positive notices is brought clearly to light in the hymns; the position of member of a political body, subject of a government, is one in which the individual is rarely conceived of; it is as head of a family, master of wealth, that he makes his appearance; this is the grand central relation, in its bearing upon which everything else is viewed. Such negative evidence alone, however, might be deemed sufficient to show that the Vedic peoples, like other races whom we know at similar primitive epochs in their history, were communities of freemen, whose kings were no more than their chief men and leaders in war. They were not strictly agricultural, although not neglecting the cultivation of the earth; for their chief possessions were their flocks and herds. Among these, the horned cattle, kine, occupy as prominent a place as throughout the whole after course of Indian history; they form the main source of wealth: the word *gau*, 'cow,' exhibits in the Vedic language the same extensive ramifications of meaning and composition as in the later Sanskrit. Sheep and goats are not infrequently mentioned, yet make comparatively a very small figure; the horse is common and highly valued: as the noblest animal which the Vedic people knew, he is made in the hymns a frequent subject of comparison and eulogy; he seems to have been used chiefly as an ally in war, to

draw the battle-chariots (riding on horseback is unknown), and not to have been reduced to the servitude of the plough: he occupies, then, much the same position as in later times the elephant. To the latter the Indians had hitherto hardly been introduced. The assertion sometimes met with, that he was already at this period a domesticated animal, is founded on a misunderstanding of passages in which his name has been supposed to occur; he is, in fact, mentioned but two or three times in the Rik, by the name *mrigo hastî*, 'the beast with a hand,' and in such a way as to show that he was still an object of wonder and terror; in the Atharvan he occurs also, only rarely, under the name *hastin* (the *mriga* now left off), and is exalted as the mightiest and most magnificent of animals; nothing appears there to show that he had been reduced to the service of man. The commonest enemy of the herds is the wolf; the lion is also frequently mentioned; and, in the Atharvan, the tiger; the bear is of very rare occurrence. If not properly an agricultural, this was by no means a nomadic people; pasturage for their herds was too abundant to compel them often to change their location; they dwelt together in open villages, *grâma*, or in fortified strongholds, *pur*. They are a warlike race, engaged in constant hostilities, not only with their aboriginal foes, but with their Aryan brethren likewise; the object is that for which alone such a people strive, booty. It is with no evil conscience that they wage this predatory warfare; they ask of their gods success in it with the utmost simplicity and good faith; their prayers are ever, not for the peaceable preservation and increase only of their present possessions, but that they may be enriched with the spoils of their enemies. Their names for the combat, the similes they derive from it, the whole strain in which it is mentioned in their hymns, witness to the thorough zest and spirit with which they fought. Their weapons are the usual ones: sword, bow.

spear, mail, and the like. The peaceful arts are not so prominent among them, as indeed in this respect the Indians always remained far behind the Egyptians and Chinese; anything like architecture is not alluded to; from the circumstance that the artful construction of a poetic verse is often compared to the fabrication of a chariot by a smith, it would seem that the latter was the most perfect work of handicraft which they knew. Poetry is, of course, in full bloom; the art of lyric composition is highly prized, and its productions, as the poets themselves in their hymns not seldom boast, are dearly paid for by the rich and great.

In all this, as will have been already noticed, appears nothing of that system of castes which has come to form an essential part of our conception of the Indian state. And it is evident that such a system would be highly incongruous with a condition of things like that here described. Where the population generally is a grazing and agricultural one, there could be no separate caste of tillers of the earth; where all are warriors, no class of soldiers; where each individual has full access by offering to the gods, no privileged order of priests. In the early Vedic times, then, the castes had no existence; the process by which they afterwards developed themselves, if not yet clear in all its details, may nevertheless be traced out, in the main, with tolerable certainty. From the mass of the Aryan population severed themselves in course of time two privileged classes, a priesthood and an aristocracy. The beginnings of the former appear very early, in the employment by the great of certain individuals or families distinguished for wisdom, sanctity, poetic gift, as their representatives in worship, under the title of *purohita*, 'one set in front.' The change of the free Vedic religion into a regulated ceremonial would be accompanied by the growth of such families into a class who should possess a monopoly of communication with the gods; the

accumulative possession of hereditary learning, exemption from the struggles and commotions amid which the later order of things was founded, would rapidly increase their influence and power; and among a people of such religious tendencies as the Hindus, they might readily attain to the highest rank and consideration in the state. The name which they received marks them as those who busied themselves with, or had the charge of, worship. The neuter noun *brâhman*, which has become the parent of a whole family of derivatives, is of frequent occurrence in the Veda: it comes from the root *barh*, 'exert, strain, extend,' and denotes simply 'worship,' as the offering which the elevated affections and strained desires of the devout bring to the gods.[1] From it, by a customary formative process, the gender being changed and the accent thrown forward, is derived the masculine *brahmán*, signifying any presenter of such an offering, 'a worshipper.' These are the only significations of the two terms in the earlier parts of the Veda: their application to denote the impersonal divine principle, and the impersonation of that principle as highest divinity, is far later, and the work not so much of the religion, as of the religious philosophy of the Hindu. The latter of the two has also become one of the names of the caste; but this is more frequently distinguished by the title *brâhmana*, which is an adjective formation from the neuter *brâhman* in its signification as given above. The second class would seem to have been founded by the families of those petty princes who had borne rule in the olden time, but had most of them lost their regal authority in the convulsions which attended the transference of the race from the narrower limits of the Penjab to the great valley of Hindostan, and the consolidation of the separate clans

[1] It is proper to mention that the etymological signification of *brahman*, and the connection of its various later meanings, are matters of much uncertainty and controversy.

into extensive monarchies. Their name, *kshatriya*, is an adjective from the ancient noun *kshatra*, which, as meaning 'rūle, dominion,' occurs in all the three languages of the Veda, the Avesta, and the Persian inscriptions: it denotes, originally, simply 'possessed of authority,' and is so sometimes applied in the Veda even to the gods. After the separation from it of these two classes, the great mass of the Aryan population would remain to constitute the third caste, still retaining the appellation *viç* (or its derivative *vaiçya*), which had been once the name of the whole people. The fourth class was not of Aryan extraction, but was composed of such of the ancient possessors of the soil as had preferred to submit to, rather than retire before, the superior power of the invader, and had become incorporated into the state in the capacity of menial dependents upon their conquerors. Their name, *çûdra*, is perhaps the native appellation of a people thus reduced: it is a word of very rare occurrence in the Vedas, as we have already seen that the Aryans commonly styled their native foes *dasyu;* in several passages of the Atharvan, however, *çûdra* is directly contrasted with *ârya*. Further than this, it occurs only as name of the caste; for it should be observed that the period of composition of some of the Vedic lyrics extends down to a time when the system had in its main features become established: hymns of the tenth book of the Rik and of the Atharvan recognize the four principal classes, and one even presents the fable of their origin from different parts of the body of the Deity.[1]

It lies in the nature of the case, that the Vedic writings present upon no other point in Indian antiquity so full and detailed information as upon the ancient Indian religion. Nor could we, though having regard to the

[1] The fullest authentic information as to the beginnings and developments of the caste system is given in the first volume of Dr. J. Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts* (2d edition, London, 1868).

elucidation of Indian history alone, well wish it otherwise. Considering how closely, as already remarked, the whole course of that history is intertwined with religion; considering, too, what vast influence the later religious institutions and creations of India have had upon a large portion of the human race, and how difficult was the problem they offered to one who would understand them thoroughly in their origin and history, nothing was more to be desired than just that picture which the Vedas present of the original national creed out of which all the others, in obedience to the laws imposed by the intellectual and moral growth of the people, have sprung.[1]

After what has been already seen of the difference between the ancient and modern periods in Indian history, no one will be surprised to find the Vedic religion as much unlike the creeds which have been wont until very recently to go exclusively by the name of Indian, as the free Vedic state is unlike the artificially regulated institutions of Brahmanism. So wide and fundamental a difference, however, as actually exists, one might not be prepared for: saving a few names, they seem at first sight to have nothing in common; the chief figures in each are either entirely wanting in the other, or occupy so changed a position as to be scarcely recognizable for the same. To characterize the Vedic religion in general terms is not difficult: it is not one which has originated in the minds of single individuals, inspired or uninspired, and by them been taught to others; it is not one which has been nursed into its present form by the fostering care of a caste or priesthood; it is one which has arisen in the whole body of the people, and is a true expression of the collective view which a simple-minded, but highly gifted nation, inclined to religious veneration, took of the wonders of

[1] The fourth and fifth volumes of Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts* are especially to be consulted respecting the Vedic divinities, and their relation to the objects of later Hindu worship.

creation and the powers to which it conceived them ascribable. It is, what every original religion must be that is not communicated to man by direct inspiration from above, a nature-religion, a worship of the powers supposed to lie back of and produce the phenomena of the visible world. And in its character as such a religion, it is the purest of those of which record has come down to us from antiquity, the least mixed with elements of reflection, of abstraction, of systematizing. It bears to the early religions of the other members of the Indo-European family such a relation as the Vedic dialect to their languages; being the most original, the least distorted, and the purest of them all; the one in which may be traced out most of the features of that creed which we may suppose to have been common to the whole family at the time of their dispersion; the one, too, which for its transparency and simplicity is best calculated to illustrate the rise and growth of such a religion in general. These properties lend it a high value as a guide to the explanation of the obscure myths and observances of the other kindred nations; and its importance for the investigation of the general history of religions among mankind is not less decided.[1] These are not matters, however, which properly come under our particular notice here: it will be enough to have thus briefly referred to them, before passing on to a summary presentation of the main features of the religion itself, and some of its more important relations to its Indian successors.

It is a very ancient classification of the Vedic divinities, being known to the hymns themselves, that allots them severally to one of three domains: earth, atmosphere, and heaven. This division may be conveniently retained, and we may commence our view with the gods of the lower region, the earth.

[1] The lectures on language and the essays (*Chips*) of Max Müller have done most to call the attention of English readers to this side of the interest belonging to the study of Vedic religion.

The earth herself makes no remarkable figure here: she is indeed deified, at least partially; is addressed as the mother and sustainer of all beings; is, generally in company with the sky, invoked to grant blessings; yet this never advanced further than a lively personation might go. The same may be said of rivers, trees, and other objects upon the earth's surface. They are not of the class of appearances which the Indian seized upon as objects of his veneration; they do not offer points enough capable of being grasped by the fancy, were too little mysterious. Only one phenomenon, namely fire, was calculated to give rise to so distinct a conception of something divine as to appear as a fully developed divinity. Agni, the god of fire (the name is identical with the Latin *ignis*), is one of the most prominent in the whole Pantheon; his hymns are more numerous than those to any other god. Astonishment and admiration at the properties of this element, as the most wonderful and mysterious of all with which man comes into daily and familiar contact, and exultation over its reduction to the service and partial control of mankind, are abundantly expressed in the manner in which he is addressed. He is praised as an immortal among mortals, a divinity upon earth; his nobleness and condescension, that he, a god, deigns to sit in the very dwellings of men, are extolled. The other gods have established him here as high-priest and mediator for the human race: he was the first who made sacrifice and taught men to have recourse above; he is messenger between heaven and earth: he, on the one hand, bears aloft the prayers and offerings, and secures their gaining in return the blessings demanded; and, on the other hand, brings the gods themselves to the altars of their worshipper, and puts them in possession there of the gifts presented to them. When the sun is down, and the daylight gone, Agni is the only divinity left on earth to protect mortals till the following dawn; his beams then shine abroad, and dispel the de-

mons of darkness, the *rakshas*, whose peculiar enemy and destroyer he is. These attributes and offices form the staple theme of his songs, amplified and varied without limit, and coupled with general ascriptions of praise, and prayers for blessings to be directly bestowed by him, or granted through his intercession. Among his frequent appellations are *vaiçvânara*, 'belonging to all men,' *havyavâha*, 'bearer of the offering,' *jâtavedas* and *viçvavedas*, 'all-possessing,' *pâvaka*, 'purifier,' *rakshohan*, 'demon-slayer.' He is styled son of the lightning or of the sun, as sometimes kindled by them; but, as in all primitive nations, the ordinary mode of his production is by the friction of two dry billets of wood; and this birth of his, as a wonder and a mystery unparalleled, is painted in the hymns in dark and highly figurative language: the ten fingers of the kindler are ten virgins who bring him to birth; the two bits of wood are his mothers; once born he grows up rapidly in their lap, as they lie there prostrate upon the earth; he turns upon them, but not for milk — he devours them; the arms of the kindler fear him, and lift themselves above him in wonder. Agni's proper offering is clarified butter, ghee (*ghrita*); when this is sprinkled into the flame, it mounts higher and glows more fiercely; the god has devoured the gift, and thus testifies his satisfaction and pleasure.

To the second domain, the atmosphere, belong the various divinities of the wind and storm. God of the breeze, the gentler motion of the air, is Vâyu (from the root *vâ*, 'blow'). He drives a thousand steeds; his breath chases away the demons; he comes in the earliest morning, as the first breath of air that stirs itself at day-break, to drink the soma, and the Auroras weave for him shining garments. The storm-winds are a troop, the Maruts or Rudras; the two names are indifferently used, but the former is much the more usual (the etymology of neither is fully established). They drive spotted stags,

wear shining armor, and carry spears in their hands; no one knows whence they come nor whither they go; their voice is heard aloud as they come rushing on; the earth trembles and the mountains shake before them. They belong in Indra's train, and are his almost constant allies and companions. They are called the sons of Rudra, who is conceived of as peculiar god of the tempest. As their father, he is very often mentioned; as a divinity with independent attributes, he is of much rarer occurrence; hymns addressed to him alone are but few. He is, as might be expected, a terrible god; he carries a great bow from which he hurls a sharp missile at the earth; he is called the "ruler of men" (*kshayadvîra*); his wrath is deprecated, and he is besought not to harm his worshipper; if not in the Rik, at least in the Atharvan and Brâhmanas, he is styled "lord of the animals," as the unhoused beasts of the field are especially at the mercy of the pitiless storm. At the same time, to propitiate him, he is addressed as master of a thousand remedies, best of physicians, protector from harm. This may have its ground, too, partly in the beneficial effects of the tempest in freshening the atmosphere of that sultry clime. Rudra's chief interest consists in the circumstance that he forms the point of connection between the Vedic religion and the later Çiva-worship. Çiva is a god unknown to the Vedas; his name is a word of not infrequent occurrence in the hymns, indeed, but means simply 'propitious;' not even in the Atharvan is it the epithet of a particular divinity, or distinguished by its usage from any other adjective. As given to him whose title it has since become, it seems one of those euphemisms so frequent in the Indian religion, applied as a soothing and flattering address to the most terrible god in the whole Pantheon. The precise relation between Çiva and Rudra is not yet satisfactorily traced out. The introduction of an entirely new divinity from the mountains of the north has been supposed, who was

grafted in upon the ancient religion by being identified with Rudra; or, again, a blending of some of Agni's attributes with those of Rudra to originate a new development. Perhaps neither of these may be necessary; Çiva may be a local form of Rudra, arisen under the influence of peculiar climatic relations in the districts from which he made his way down into Hindostan proper; introduced among and readily accepted by a people which, as the Atharvan shows, was strongly tending towards a terrorism in its religion.

The chief god of this division, however, and indeed the most conspicuous in the whole list of Vedic divinities, is Indra. The etymology of his name is still disputed; his natural significance is not a matter of doubt; he is the god of the clear blue sky. That his worship under this name is earlier than the separation of the Aryans into their two branches is proved by his occurrence among the *devs* mentioned in the Avesta; it is difficult, however, to believe that the great development and prominence of the myth of which he is the representative, and his consequent high rank, are not properly Indian. The kernel of the Indian myth, namely, is as follows. The clouds are conceived of as a covering in which a hostile demon, *Vritra*, 'the enveloper,' extends himself over the face of the sky, hiding the sun, threatening to blot out the light, and withholding from the earth the heavenly waters. Indra engages in fierce combat with him, and pierces him with his thunderbolt; the waters are released, and fall in abundant showers upon the earth, and the sun and the clear sky are once more restored to view. Or again: the demons have stolen the reservoirs of water, represented under the figure of herds of kine, and hidden them away in the hollows of the mountains; Indra finds them, splits the caverns with his bolt, and they are set again at liberty. This is the centre about which the greatness of Indra has grown up. In it there may be something derived from

the earliest antiquity of the Indo-European family, as the occurrence of strikingly similar traits in the earliest Greek and Roman myths gives reason to believe. But that it should ever have advanced to such a degree of importance, elevating the deity to whom it is attached to the very first rank, is hardly conceivable save in a dry and arid country like the Penjab, where the rains are the conditions of all prosperity, and their interruption brings immediate and general suffering. In the more northern land of the Zoroastric people, as appears particularly from the earliest books of the Vendidad, cold, and not drought, is the enemy most feared; the winter is there the work of the demons, which comes in to blast Ahura Mazdâ's fair creation, and as a refuge against the evils of which Yima builds his abode of the blest. Even had the original nature-religion there been left to follow its natural development, it could never have been an Indra that should lift himself to the first place in it. Be that as it may, Indra stands at the head of the Vedic divinities. By this is not meant, however, that he is king among them, endowed with any authority over the rest: no such reduction to system of the religion had taken place as should establish a relation of this kind among its gods; they are as independent, each in his own domain, as the natural phenomena of which they are the personifications. Nor, again, that the nature of his attributes and of his concern with the affairs of human life is such as to surround him with the highest interest, to invest him with the most commanding dignity of character: in this regard, as will be seen, Varuna stands decidedly above him. But he is simply the most conspicuous of the gods, the one who, as having closest concern with the procuring of the ordinary blessings of physical life, is the most frequent and favorite theme of praise and invocation. He drives a chariot drawn by two yellow horses; the thunderbolt is his weapon; the storm-winds, the Maruts, are his usual

companions. It is needless to attempt an enumeration of the endlessly varied features which the hymns to his praise present; a few among his most frequent epithets are *maghavan*, 'liberal,' *marutvant*, 'leader of the Marut,' *çakra*, 'powerful,' *çatakratu*, 'of hundred-fold strength,' *vritrahan*, 'Vritra-slayer,' *somapâ*, 'soma-drinker.' His own proper offering is the soma; he comes in his chariot to quaff the draughts of it presented to him by his worshippers, and then, in the fury it produces, drives off at once to transfix Vritra, and break open the fastnesses of the mountains.

The gods of the third domain, of heaven, are for the most part those who represent the various phenomena of light. The very prominent part which this element has played in giving form to the earliest religions of all nations is well known; that of the Indian forms no exception; he even manifests a peculiar sensitiveness to the blessings of the light, and a peculiar abhorrence of darkness. The former is to him life, motion, happiness, truth; the latter death, helplessness, evil, the time and abode of demons. Accordingly, the phenomena of the night, moon and stars, he almost ignores; the one makes no figure at all in his religion, the others are but rarely even alluded to. The worship of the Indian commenced at day-break; Ushas, the dawn, is the earliest subject of his morning songs. The promise of the day is hailed with overflowing and inspiring joy; the feeling of relief as the burden of darkness is lifted off the world, and the freedom and cheerfulness of the day commence again, prompts to truly poetic strains, and the songs to Ushas are among the finest in the Veda. She is addressed as a virgin in glittering robes, who chases away the darkness, or to whom her sister night willingly yields her domain; who prepares a path for the sun, is the signal of the sacrifice, rouses all beings from slumber, gives sight to the darkened, and power of motion to the prostrate and helpless. In the midst of such glad-

some greetings, however, the poet is reminded, by the thought of the many dawns that have thus shone upon the earth and the many that are to fqllow them, of those who, having witnessed the former ones, are now passed away, and of those again who shall welcome them when he is no more; and so he is led to mournful reflections on the wasting away of life, as one day after another is subtracted from the time allotted to each mortal.

Here will be best noticed two enigmatical divinities, the Açvins, since they are brought into a special connection with the earliest morning; and if their explanation is to be found in natural phenomena, it must be sought here. The oldest Indian theology is greatly at a loss how to explain their essence, nor have modern attempts met with much better success. They are never addressed separately, nor by distinct names; they are simply *açvinau*, 'the two horsemen.' They are conspicuous figures in the Vedic Pantheon; their hymns are numerous and often very long. The later mythology makes them the physicians of the gods; here they are general benefactors of men, and helpers in circumstances of difficulty and distress. They are peculiarly rich in myths: some of their hymns are little more than recitals of the many particular favors they have shown to individuals named. They have given a husband or a wife; brought back a lost child; restored the blind to sight; relieved one of his worthless old body, furnishing him a new one instead of it; supplied another with a serviceable metal leg, to replace one lost in battle; rescued one who was in danger of drowning; drawn another out of a deep pit; and so on. They ride together upon a golden chariot, all the parts of which are in threes. Their great antiquity is attested by the mention made of them in two passages of the Avesta; and it seems far from impossible that they may be originally identical with the Dioscuri of the Greeks.

To the other gods of this division belongs more or less

distinctly the common name of Aditya. Of the Adityas, as is well known, the later mythology counts twelve, all sun-gods, and representing that luminary in phases of the twelve months: they are sons of Aditi, and over against them are made to stand the Daityas, sons of Diti. All this the Vedas show to be a fabrication of the modern mythologizing. In the ancient religion exist no such beings as the Daityas; the number of the Adityas is nowhere fixed, and so many as twelve it would be impossible to bring together. Nor do they stand as a class in any connection with the sun; they are much rather founded upon conceptions of the beneficent influences of the element of light in general; yet ideas of various origin and significancy are here grouped together, and the names of many of them, and their characteristics, almost lift them from the domain of a pure nature-religion into that of one based on moral relations. It seems as if here were an attempt on the part of the Indian religion to take a new development in a moral direction, which a change in the character and circumstances of the people had caused to fail in the midst, and fall back again into forgetfulness, while yet half finished and indistinct. Their name, *âditya*, comes from the noun *aditi*, which signifies literally 'unharmableness, indestructibility;' and it denotes them as 'of an eternal, unapproachable nature.' The elevation of Aditi herself to the rank of a distinct personage may be a reflex from the derivative, which was capable of being interpreted as a patronymic, instead of as an appellative, and made to mean 'sons of Aditi.' Already in the early hymns, however, appears the germ of what she became in after times: she is not infrequently invoked in a general prayer to the gods, and is now and then addressed as a king's daughter, as she of fair children, and the like; but this personification never went far enough to entitle her fairly to a place in the list of Vedic divinities. To the Adityas is ascribed unapproachability by any-

thing that can harm or disturb; in them can be distinguished neither right hand nor left, form nor limit; they are elevated above all imperfections; they do not sleep nor wink; their character is all truth; they hate and punish guilt; to preserve mortals from sin is their highest office; they have a peculiar title to the epithet *asura*, 'immaterial, spiritual' — for this is the proper and original meaning of this term; it is a derivative adjective from the noun *asu*, 'life, existence,' which itself is from the root *as*. If it came to denote 'demonic, demon' (and this, along with the other, is its frequent signification in the Veda also), it seems to have suffered only such a transfer as *demon* itself exhibits, or as appears in our use of *spirits* chiefly to denote those of evil and malign influence.

Three of the gods who may in the most liberal reckoning be counted among the Adityas — namely, Savitar, Vishnu, Pûshan — cannot by virtue of their characters offer so clear a title to the rank. Though the name is often applied to them, it is more as an honorific epithet; in hymns addressed directly to the Adityas, ascribing to them the attributes stated above, they do not occur. They stand in a nearer relation to the sun, as impersonations of that luminary in different characters. The sun himself, indeed, assumes not infrequently, under his ordinary name of Sûrya, the character of a divinity, and is addressed as such; is himself styled an Aditya, is said to drive a chariot drawn by seven golden steeds, to fright away the night, to make the constellations fly and hide themselves like thieves, and the like. This, however, is not carried so far as to give him any prominence or peculiar importance. As already remarked, it is not in the character of the Vedic religion to attach its highest veneration to phenomena so distinct and comprehensible as such. The sun is considered rather as a single manifestation of the element of light; is quite as often

personified as the ornamented bird of heaven, or as a great steed, whom Mitra and Varuna made for the good of mortals; who causes all men to rejoice, as like a hero he mounts up on the firmament. Savitar, the first of the three above mentioned, is the sun or the light considered as a producing, enlivening power (the word means simply 'generator'). He is not the sun itself; that is said to be his constant companion, in whose rays he takes delight. He both gladdens the earth with light and envelops it again in darkness; rouses and sends to rest all mortals; gives to men their life, to the gods their immortality; he stretches out his golden arms over all creation, as if to bless it; his almost constant epithet is *deva*, 'shining, heavenly.' Vishnu is the only one of the great gods of the Hindu triad who makes his appearance under the same name in the Veda. Here, however, there is absolutely nothing which points to any such development as he was afterwards to receive. The history of the religion of Vishnu is not clearer than of that of Çiva. It seems to have been, like the latter, of a popular local origin, and perhaps to have fused together many local divinities into one person. Both Çiva and Vishnu were supreme and independent gods, each to his own followers; it was only as the priest-caste saw their position endangered by the powerful uprising of the new religions, and were compelled, in order to maintain themselves, to take a stand at the head of the movement, and give it a direction, that they forced the two into a theoretical connection with one another, adding to complete the system a god Brahma, who was the mere creature of learned reflection, and never had any hold at all on the popular mind. Vishnu in the Veda is the sun in his three stations of rise, zenith, and setting. This the Vedic poets conceive of as a striding through heaven at three steps; this is Vishnu's great deed, which in all his hymns is sung to his praise; it constitutes the only peculiar trait belonging

to him. Concerning these steps it is said that two of them are near to the habitations of men; the third none can attain, not even the bird in its flight; he took them for the benefit of mortals, that all might live safe and happy under them; the middle station, the zenith, is called Vishnu's place. The third of these divinities, Pûshan (the name means 'nourisher, prosperer'), is especially distinguished by the myths and attributes with which he is richly furnished. He is protector of the flocks, and bears the shepherd's crook as his weapon; his chariot is drawn by goats, and a goat is sacrificed to him; another common offering to him is soup, whence, as a kind of joke upon him, he is said to have bad teeth, as if able to eat nothing but broth; he exercises a special care over roads, and is the best guide to be invoked on a journey.

The gods who are in the fullest sense Adityas are Daksha, Ança, Bhaga, Aryaman, Mitra, Varuna. The words, all save the last, have a moral meaning. Daksha is 'insight, skill, cleverness.' Ança is 'attainment, portion.' Bhaga has a very similar meaning, 'share, fortune, enjoyment.' This is the word which, in the language of the Persian inscriptions, and in that of the Slavic nations, has come to mean 'god' in general. Aryaman is less clear. By the etymology it should mean something like 'honorable;' it seems to be used for 'patron, protector.' Mitra is 'friend.' These five make but a faint and subordinate figure in the Veda. Daksha and Ança are even very rarely mentioned; Bhaga appears more frequently, but only in general invocations of the Adityas, or of all the gods, with no distinctive features; Aryaman's name stands very often connected with those of Mitra and Varuna, but he has no prominent independent subsistence, nor is he particularly characterized; and finally, Mitra himself is, save in one single hymn, invoked only in the closest connection with Varuna. Varuna is the central figure in the group, the one in whom the attributes of the

whole class are united and exalted into higher majesty, who stands forth the noblest figure in the Vedic religion. His name is identical with the Greek οὐρανός; coming from the root *var*, 'envelop,' it signifies the all-embracing heaven, the outermost boundary of creation, which contains within itself the whole universe with its phenomena. Such a fundamental idea was peculiarly qualified to receive the development which has here been given to it. Varuna, namely, is the orderer and ruler of the universe; he established the eternal laws which govern the movements of the world, and which neither immortal nor mortal may break; he regulated the seasons; he appointed sun, moon, and stars their courses; he gave to each creature that which is its peculiar characteristic. In a no less degree is he a moral governor: to the Adityas, and to him in particular, attach themselves very remarkable, almost Christian, ideas respecting moral right and wrong, transgression and its punishment; here the truly devout and pious spirit of the ancient Indian manifests itself most plainly. While in hymns to the other divinities long life, wealth, power are the objects commonly prayed for, of the Adityas is craved purity, forgiveness of sin, freedom from its further commission; to them are offered humble confessions of guilt and repentance; it is a sore grief to the poets to know that man daily transgresses Varuna's commands; they acknowledge that without his aid they are not masters of a single moment; they fly to him for refuge from evil, expressing at the same time all confidence that their prayers will be heard and granted. From his station in the heaven Varuna sees and hears everything; nothing can remain hidden from him; he is surrounded, too, by a train of ministers, "spies" (*spaças*), who, restless, unerring, watch heaven and earth to note iniquity, or go about bearing in their hands Varuna's bonds, sickness and death, with which to bind the guilty. These spies are a very ancient feature in the Aryan relig-

ion; they appear again in the Avesta, being there assigned to Mithra. The coincidences, indeed, throughout this whole domain between the Indian and Persian religions are in the highest degree striking and interesting. Ahura Mazdâ or Ormuzd himself is probably a development of Varuna; the Adityas are correlatives of the Amshaspands; there even exists in the Persian the same close connection between Ahura Mazdâ and Mithra, as in the Indian between Mitra and Varuna; and this is so much the more striking, as after the Zoroastric reformation of the Persian religion there was properly no longer a place there for Mithra, and he is not even numbered among the Amshaspands.

This most interesting side of the ancient Indian religion exhibits itself in the Vedic hymns as already fading into oblivion; the process of degradation of Varuna, its principal representative, which has later stripped him of all his majestic attributes, and converted him into a mere god of the ocean, is commenced; Indra, on the one hand, is rising to a position of greater prominence and honor above him, and, on the other hand, various single allusions show that a special connection between him and the waters was already establishing itself. On what principle the latter was founded does not admit at present of being satisfactorily shown.

Our view of the Vedic religion would be essentially defective, did we fail to take notice of what was the state of belief prevailing in it respecting that important point, immortality and a future life.[1] That the later idea of transmigration, and all that is connected with it, had no existence there, it is hardly necessary to say. In place of them appears a simple faith that the life in this world is not the last of man, that after death he goes to an abode of happiness above. Yama, here as later, is the chief personage with whom this abode stands connected. He is not the

[1] For a fuller exposition of the Vedic doctrine, see the following essay.

terrible being, however, into which a shuddering fear of death afterwards converted him; his character is a beneficent and attractive one; he is simply chief and ruler of the dead; he grants to departed souls a resting-place, where they enjoy in his company happiness without alloy. His origin and primitive significance give him this position. For his name does not come, according to the usual interpretation, from the root *yam*, 'subdue, repress;' it is radically akin to the Latin *gem-ini*, etc., and means 'twin.' In him and his sister Yamî are conceived the first human pair, parents of the whole following race; he is, therefore, as is expressly stated in the hymns, the first who made his way to the skies, pointing out the road thither to all succeeding generations, and preparing a place for their reception; by the most natural transition, then, he becomes their king. It is in entire consistency with this, that in the Persian story, where he appears as Yima (later Jem-shid), he is made ruler of the golden age, and founder of the Paradise.[1]

Such are the main features of the Vedic religion; the considerable number of less prominent and important deities, personifications, perhaps even apotheoses, which also figure in it, it is not worth while to catalogue. Their nature and value is not in all cases clear, and their absence will not affect the general correctness of this picture.

We close, then, here our consideration of the Vedas, expressing once more the hope that this presentation of the subject may suffice to show their high importance to all students of antiquity, of civilization, and of religions; as well as their absolute indispensability to those who would understand that portion of the history of our race which has been transacted within the limits of India.

[1] See Roth, in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenl. Gesellschaft*, vol. iv., for 1850, where this interpretation of the myths is first given, and they, in both their Indian and Persian form, are expressly handled.

II.

THE VEDIC DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE.

THE design of this essay[1] is to exhibit an interesting feature in the ancient religion of India, and, at the same time, to furnish an illustration of the manner in which the Veda is made to contribute to the history of Hindu creeds and institutions, and of the character of the light which it sheds upon them.

What has been for more than two thousand years the prevailing belief in India respecting death and a future life is so well known, that it is not necessary here to do more than characterize it briefly and generally. It is the so-called doctrine of transmigration. It teaches that the present life is but one of an indefinite series of existences which each individual soul is destined to pass through; that death is only the termination of one, and the entrance upon another, of the series. Further, it holds that all life is one in essence; that there is no fundamental difference between the vital principle of a human being and that of any other living creature; so that, when a soul quits its tenement of flesh, it may find itself next imprisoned in the body of some inferior animal: being, in fact, liable to make experience of all the various forms of life, in its progress toward the final consummation of its existence. The grade of each successive birth is regarded as determined by the sum of merit or demerit resulting

[1] First read before the American Oriental Society, at its meeting in New York, November 3d, 1858.

from the actions of the lives already past. A life of exceeding folly and wickedness may condemn one to be born for myriads of years in the shape of abhorred and groveling animals, or among the depraved, the ignorant, and the outcast among men; on the other hand, it is possible to attain to such an exalted pitch of wisdom and virtue, that the soul escapes the condemnation of existence, and sinks in the void, or merges its individuality in the universality of the world-spirit. It is held also — although rather, it would seem, as a relic of creeds which have preceded this, than as any properly organic part of it — that, in further recompense of past actions, an intermediate period may be spent, after death, in enjoying the delights of a heaven, or suffering the torments of a hell, before the weary round of births is again taken up. But this is a feature of the creed of only minor consequence. The inexorable fate which dooms each creature to a repeated entrance upon a life full of so many miseries in the present, fraught with such dangers for the future, is what the Hindu dreads, and would escape. He flies from existence, as the sum of all miseries; the aim of his life is to make sure that it be the last of him. For it is virtual, if not defined and acknowledged annihilation, that the Hindu strives after; it is the destruction of consciousness, of individuality, of all the attributes and circumstances which make up what we call life.

The antiquity of this strange doctrine, and its dominion over the popular mind of India, are clearly shown by the fact that even Buddhism, the popular revolution against the creeds and the forms of the Brahmanic religion, implicitly adopted it, venturing only to teach a new and more effective method of escaping from the bonds of existence into the longed-for freedom of nonentity. Yet, in spite of this evidence of its great age, we should be led to suspect, upon internal grounds alone, that it was not the earliest belief of the Hindu nation. It has that stamp

of elaboration, of a subtle refinement of philosophy, which is not wont to characterize the creeds of a primitive period; it is in harmony rather with the other Brahmanic institutions in the midst of which we find it, and which speak plainly of a long previous history of growth and gradual development. There are also external evidences pointing us to the same conclusion, in the elaborate system of funeral rites and ceremonies practised by the Hindus. These seem not only not to grow out of the doctrine of transmigration, as its natural expression, but even to be in many points quite inconsistent with it. Thus, to insist upon only a single instance: it is the duty of every pious Hindu to make upon the first day of each lunar month an offering to the Fathers, as they are called, or to the *manes* of the deceased ancestors of his family. Food is set out for them, of which they are invited to come and partake, and they are also addressed with supplications, in a manner which supposes them to be glorified spirits, capable of continuing in their condition after death intercourse with those whom they have left behind, and of exercising over them a protecting and fostering care. As we look yet further into the forms of the modern Hindu ceremonial, we discover not a little of the same discordance between creed and observance: the one is not explained by the other. We are forced to the conclusion, either that India derived its system of rites from some foreign source, and practised them blindly, careless of their true import, or else that those rites are the production of another doctrine, of older date, and have maintained themselves in popular usage after the decay of the creed of which they were the original expression. Between these two opinions we could not hesitate which to adopt. We know with what tenacity once-established forms are wont to maintain themselves, even when they have lost their living significance; we know how valuable an auxiliary, in studying the development of a religion, is its ritual; and we could even

proceed, by the aid of the Hindu ceremonies, comparing them carefully with what we know of the doctrines of other ancient religions, to reconstruct in part the general fabric of the earliest Hindu belief.

Fortunately, however, we are not left to this uncertain and unsatisfactory method of investigating the religious history of India. In the hymns of the Veda we have laid before us a picture of the earliest conditions, both civil and religious, of the country. They exhibit the only partially developed germs of the civilization, the creeds, the institutions, which we are wont to call Indian: in them we read the explanation of much that would otherwise have remained always an enigma in Indian history. They show us that the inconsistency of the rites with the doctrines of later times is indeed only a measure of the deviations of the latter from their ancient standard.

We will proceed to state, as briefly as possible, the views of the ancient Hindus upon the important subjects of life and death, and the life beyond the grave, and will then illustrate them by extracts from the hymns of the Veda, whence the knowledge of them is drawn.

The difference between the modern doctrines and those by which they were preceded is one not of detail merely, but of the whole spirit and character. The earliest inhabitants of India were far enough removed from the unhealthy introversion of their descendants, from their contempt of all things beneath the sun, from their melancholy opinion of the vanity and misery of existence, from their longings to shuffle off the mortal coil forever, and from the metaphysical subtlety of their views respecting the universe and its creator. They looked at all these things with the simple apprehension, the naïve faith, which usually characterizes a primitive people. They had a hearty and healthy love of earthly life, and an outspoken relish for all that makes up the ordinary pleasures of life. Wealth and a numerous offspring were the constant bur-

den of their prayers to their gods; success in predatory warfare, or in strife for consideration and power, was fervently besought. Length of days in the land, or death by no other cause than old age, was not less frequently supplicated; they clung to the existence of which they fully appreciated all the delights. Yet death, to them, was surrounded with no terrors. They regarded it as only an entrance upon a new life of happiness in the world of the departed. Somewhere beyond the grave, in the region where the gods dwelt, the children of men were assembled anew, under the sceptre of him who was the first progenitor of their race, the divine Yama. No idea of retribution was connected with that of the existence after death. It was only a prolongation of the old life, under changed conditions. They who partook of it were not severed from intercourse with those whom they had left behind upon earth, nor were they even exempt from the material wants of their earthly life. They were capable of deriving pleasure from the offerings of their descendants; they were even in a measure dependent upon those offerings for the comfortable continuance of their existence. The ancestral feasts, which it was the duty of each head of a family to provide from time to time for the deceased progenitors of the family, were not only a means of gaining the favor and protection which they, in their disembodied state, were held capable of extending, but were a pious duty toward them which might not be neglected. In this respect the early Hindu doctrine resembled the Chinese; and traces of a similar creed are found among the religious observances of many other nations.

The funeral ceremonies to which such a creed would lead need not be otherwise than simple. To illustrate those of the ancient Hindus, we will first offer the translation of a hymn from the concluding book of the Rig-Veda (x. 18), which places before our eyes the whole

series of proceedings at a burial in that early period. The passage is one of more than usual interest; it has maintained, down even to the present day, an important place in the Hindu funeral ceremonial; it has also attracted especial attention from modern European scholars, and been more than once translated.[1] We present here a new version, made with all the literalness which the case admits, and in the closest imitation of the metrical structure of the original hymn.[2]

We are to suppose the body of the deceased brought forth to the place of interment, surrounded by his friends and family. These have come out to take their leave of him, and to see him consigned to the keeping of the earth. He is cut off from among them, and they who have been his companions and intimates hitherto are to continue so no longer. They have no idea of sharing his fate, or of following him; life, and the love of life, are still strong in them; it is their special care that death shall be content for the present with the victim he has already seized, and shall leave them to the happiness of a prolonged existence. It is clear that they are not free from that uncanny feeling at having to do with a corpse, and that dread of evil consequences to result from it, which is so natural and universal, and which in so many ancient religions led to the regarding of the dead as unclean, and to the requirement of purificatory ceremonies from those who had approached or handled them. No small part of this hymn is taken up with enforcing the totality of the

[1] See an interesting and valuable article by Roth, on a subject closely akin with that of this paper, in the *Zeitsch. d. Deutsch. Morg. Gesellschaft*, viii. 467 *seq.*; and another by Müller, in the following volume of the same series, for 1855: the only English translation which we know is that of Wilson, in the *Journ. Roy. As. Society of Gr. Br. and Ireland*, xvi. 201 *seq.*; this latter, like most of Wilson's translations from the Veda, is made rather from the native commentary than from the Veda itself, and neither in spirit, nor as an accurate translation, fairly represents its original.

[2] Like almost all the Vedic hymns, it is in a simple iambic strain, dependent for its movement upon the quantity of the syllables, but far from strict in its construction, and changing, often within the limits of a single verse, from a half-line of eleven syllables to one of twelve, or of eight.

separation which is now to take place between the living and the dead. It commences with a deprecatory appeal to death itself: —

Go forth, O Death, upon a distant pathway,
one that 's thine own, not that the gods do travel;
I speak to thee who eyes and ears possessest;
harm not our children, harm thou not our heroes.

In the second and third verses, the spokesman and conductor of the ceremony addresses the assembled friends, dwelling upon the difference of their condition from that of him whom they accompany to his last resting-place, and upon the precautions which they have taken against following him further than to the edge of the grave. In explanation of the allusion in the first line, it should be remarked that other Vedic passages show it to have been the custom to attach a clog to the foot of a corpse, as if by that means to restrain death, of whom the dead body was the possession and representative, of his freedom to attack the survivors. Such a naïve symbolism is very characteristic of the primitive simplicity of the whole ceremony, and of the belief which inspired it.

Ye who death's foot have clogged ere ye came hither,
your life and vigor longer yet retaining,
Sating yourselves with progeny and riches,
clean be ye now, and purified, ye offerers!

These have come here, not of the dead, but living;
our worship of the gods hath been propitious;
We've onward gone to dancing and to laughter,
our life and vigor longer yet retaining.

Now, in order to symbolize the distinct boundary and separation which they would fain establish between the living and the dead, a line that death may not pass, an obstacle which he may not surmount, the officiating person draws a circle, and sets a stone betwixt it and the grave, with the words: —

This fix I as protection for the living;
may none of them depart on that same errand;
Long may they live, a hundred numerous autumns,
'twixt death and them a mountain interposing.

As day succeeds to day in endless series,
as seasons happily move on with seasons,
As each that passes lacks not its successor,
so do thou make their lives move on, Creator!

The company now begin to leave their former position about the bier, and to go up into the place thus set apart as the domain of the living. The men are the first to go, in measured procession, while the director of the ceremony says: —

Ascend to life, old age your portion making,
each after each, advancing in due order;
May Twashtar, skillful fashioner, propitious,
cause that you here enjoy a long existence.

The women next follow, the wives at their head: —

These women here, not widows, blessed with husbands,
may deck themselves with ointment and with perfume;
Unstained by tears, adorned, untouched with sorrow,
the wives may first ascend unto the altar.

There remains now with the deceased only his wife; she too is summoned away, the last; the person whose duty it is to be henceforth her support and protection, to sustain the part of a husband toward her — a brother-in-law, the rules say, or a foster-child, or an old servant — grasps her hand and leads her after the rest, while she is thus addressed: —

Go up unto the world of life, O woman!
thou liest by one whose soul is fled; come hither!
To him who grasps thy hand, a second husband,
thou art as wife to spouse become related.

Hitherto the deceased has carried in his hand a bow; that is now taken from him, to signify that he has done forever with all the active occupations of life, and that those who remain behind have henceforth his part to play, and are to enjoy the honors and pleasures which might have been his.

The bow from out the dead man's hand now taking,
that ours may be the glory, honor, prowess —
Mayest thou there, we here, rich in retainers,
vanquish our foes and them that plot against us.

The separation between the dead and the living has thus been made complete, and this part of the ceremony concluded with the benediction to both parties, the prayer that both, each in his own place and lot, may enjoy success and happiness. And now, with gentle action and tender words, the body is committed to the earth.

Approach thou now the lap of earth, thy mother,
the wide-extending earth, the ever-kindly;
A maiden soft as wool to him who comes with gifts,
she shall protect thee from destruction's bosom.

Open thyself, O earth, and press not heavily;
be easy of access and of approach to him;
As mother with her robe her child,
so do thou cover him, O earth!

May earth maintain herself thus opened wide for him;
a thousand props shall give support about him;
And may those mansions ever drip with fatness;
may they be there for evermore his refuge.

Forth from about thee thus I build away the ground;
as I lay down this clod may I receive no harm;
This pillar may the Fathers here maintain for thee;
may Yama there provide for thee a dwelling.

The funeral hymn properly closes here; in its form, however, as handed down to us, there is yet another verse, of somewhat obscure import, but which seems to be an expression of the complacency of the poet in his work; it may or may not have belonged originally to this particular hymn. It reads as follows: —

They've set me in a fitting day,
as one the plume sets on the shaft,
I've caught and used the fitting word,
as one a steed tames with the rein.

There can be no question respecting the interpretation of this interesting relic of Hindu antiquity, nor respecting the character of the action which it was intended to accompany. The record is too pictorial to be misapprehended; the ceremony is set plainly before our eyes, in all its simplicity, as a leave-taking and an interment, and

nothing besides. One or two things especially strike us in connection with it.

In the first place, we note its discordance with the modern Hindu practice of immolating the widow at the grave of her husband. Nothing could be more explicit than the testimony of this hymn against the antiquity of the practice. It finds, indeed, no support anywhere in the Vedic scriptures. The custom is of comparatively recent introduction; originating, it may be, in single instances of the voluntary self-destruction of wives who would not survive their husbands; a devotion held to be so laudable that it found imitation, gained in frequency, and became a custom, and then finally an obligation; the form of voluntary consent being kept up even to the end. Authority has been sought, however, for the practice in a fragment of this very hymn, rent from its natural connection, and a little altered: by the change of a single letter, the line which is translated above, 'the wives may first ascend unto the altar,' has been made to read, 'the wives shall go up into the place of the fire.'

Again: the funeral ceremony here depicted is evidently a burial of the body in the earth. Not a few passages might be cited from other hymns which show that this was both permitted and frequent among the more ancient Hindus. Thus we read: —

> In earth's broad, unoppressive space,
> be thou, O dead, deposited;
> The offerings thou hast made in life,
> let them drip honey for thee now.

In another verse we have a hint of a coffin, of which no mention is made in the hymn translated above: —

> Let not the tree press hard on thee,
> nor yet the earth, the great, divine;
> Among the Fathers finding place,
> thrive thou with those whom Yama rules.

Indeed, in the freedom of that early period, any convenient method of disposing of the worthless shell from

which the spirit had escaped seems to have been held allowable. Thus a verse says: —

> The buried and the cast away,
> the burnt, and they who were exposed —
> Those Fathers, Agni, all of them,
> to eat the offering, hither bring.

Again, we find the general classification made, of —

> Those burned with fire, and those whom fire hath not burned.

Considering, however, what the belief of the Hindus was in certain other points, it is not a matter for surprise that the method of incremation came by degrees to prevail over all other forms of burial. Agni (Latin, *ignis*), the fire, and the god of fire, was to the Hindus, as to other primitive peoples, the medium of communication between earth and heaven, the messenger from men to the gods, and from the gods to men. Whatever, with due ceremony and invocation, was cast into the flames on Agni's altar, was borne away upward and delivered over to the immortals. To burn the body of a deceased person was accordingly an act of solemn sacrifice, which made Agni its bearer to the other world, the future dwelling of its former possessor. There was less of spirituality, doubtless, in this doctrine, than in that which regarded the body as of no consequence, and the soul alone as capable of entering upon the other existence; but it seems rather to have gained in distinctness and in currency, and it was quite in harmony with other parts of the Hindu belief respecting the condition of the departed, which we shall notice later. There are passages in which the assumed importance of the body to its old tenant is brought out very strongly and very naïvely. Thus a verse says: —

> Start onward! bring together all thy members;
> let not thy limbs be left, nor yet thy body;
> Thy spirit, gone before, now follow after;
> wherever it delights thee, go thou thither.

Again: —

Collect thy body, with its every member;
thy limbs with help of rites I fashion for thee.

Once more, the necessity of making up any chance loss of a part or member is curiously insisted upon in the following passage: —

If some one limb was left behind by Agni,
when to the Fathers' world he hence conveyed you,
That very one I now again supply you;
rejoice in heaven with all your limbs, ye Fathers!

Before the final adjusting of the orthodox Hindu ceremonial, in the form which it has ever since maintained, it had thus become usual to dispose of the bodies of the dead by incremation only; and this is accordingly the sole method which the sacred usages of later times contemplate as allowable. And yet the hymn of which we have given the translation in full above, although originally prepared, in all probability, to accompany the celebration of some special funeral ceremony, had gained such consideration and currency as to have become inseparably connected with the general funeral service; of which, as already remarked, it even now forms a part. Its verses, in order to adapt them to their new uses, are separated from one another and from their proper connection, and are more or less distorted in meaning: a part of them are introduced in connection with the ceremony of incremation, a part with that of the later collection and interment of the relics found among the ashes of the funeral pile. It would carry us into too much detail to enter in full upon the subject of this modern transfer and alteration;[1] our present purpose is answered by directing attention to this departure also, less violent than the other, but no less a departure, from the usages of the olden time, and to the force put upon the sacred writings to make them conform to and support the new customs.

[1] We refer those who are interested in the subject to the articles of Roth and Müller, already alluded to in a former note.

In the hymn translated, there is but the briefest reference, at its close, to the new life upon which the deceased is supposed to have entered. We will go on to illustrate, by citations from other hymns, the doctrine which this one assumes, but does not exhibit.

Another hymn in the last book of the Rig-Veda (x. 14) commences thus: —

Him who went forth unto those far-off regions,
the pathway thither pointing out to many,
Vivasvant's son, the gatherer of the people,
Yama, the king, now worship with oblations.

A somewhat different version of the first part of this verse is found in the corresponding passage of the Atharva-Veda: —

Him who hath died the first of living mortals,
who to that other world the first departed, etc.

The same hymn continues: —

Yama hath found for us the first a passage;
that 's no possession to be taken from us;
Whither our fathers, of old time, departed,
thither their offspring, each his proper pathway.

And in a later verse, addressing the person at whose funeral the ceremony is performed: —

Go forth, go forth, upon the ancient pathways,
whither our fathers, of old time, departed;
There both the kings, rejoicing in the offering,
god Varuna shalt thou behold, and Yama.

These verses give the skeleton of the whole of the most ancient Hindu doctrine respecting Yama and his realm, the ruler and abode of the dead. As stated above, there was no distinction of the latter into a heaven and a hell; nor was Yama the inexorable judge and dreaded executioner which he became to the conceptions of a later time. One or two other passages will illustrate the manner in which he is almost invariably spoken of.

The living have removed him from their dwellings;
carrry him hence away, far from the village;
Death was the kindly messenger of Yama,
hath sent his soul to dwell among the Fathers.

. . . . This place the Fathers have prepared for him;
. . . . a resting-place is granted him by Yama.

I grant to him this place of rest and refuge,
to him who cometh hither, and becometh mine;
Such is the answer the wise Yama maketh;
let him approach and share in my abundance here.

There is no attempt made, in any Vedic hymn, to assign employments to the departed in their changed state, nor, for the most part, to describe their condition excepting in general terms, as one of happiness. A few passages, which are palpably of a later origin, do attempt to give definite locality to the world of the Fathers. Thus we read: —

They who within the sphere of earth are stationed,
or who are settled now in realms of pleasure.

. . . . The Fathers who have the earth — the atmosphere — the heaven
for their seat.

The "fore-heaven" the third heaven is styled,
and there the Fathers have their seat.

The subject most enlarged upon in connection with the Fathers is, naturally enough, the relation in which they still stand to their living descendants, and the duties of the latter growing out of that relation. Both have been briefly characterized above; we now present passages which illustrate the character of the rites practised, and of the belief upon which they were founded.

The Fathers are supposed to assemble, upon due invocation, about the altar of him who would pay them homage, to seat themselves upon the straw or matting spread for each of the guests invited, and to partake of the offerings set before them.

Hither with aid! ye matting-seated Fathers,
these offerings we have set for you; enjoy them!

Rise and go forth, ye Fathers, and come hither:
behold the offering for you, rich with honey;
We pray you graciously to grant us riches;
bestow upon us wealth with numerous offspring.

Come here, ye Fathers whom the fire hath sweetened,
sit each upon his seat, in loving converse;
Devour the offerings set upon the matting here;
bestow upon us wealth with numerous offspring.

It is customary, in the modern ceremonies, to invite especially to the feast the ancestors for three generations back, bestowing upon the rest the remnants only of the repast. This was also the ancient usage, as is shown by the following passage, among others: —

This portion is for thee, great-grandfather, and for them that belong with thee.
This portion is for thee, grandfather, and for them that belong with thee.
This portion is for thee, father.

It was already usual, as later, to make the offering to the Fathers monthly: —

Go forth, ye Fathers . . . .
Then, in a month, unto our dwellings come again,
to eat the offering . . . .

In the following verses, the conception is more distinctly presented of the necessity of the ancestral offerings, in order to the comfortable support of the recipients: —

These rice-grains that I strew for thee,
With sesame and oblations mixed,
Lasting, abundant, may they be;
Yama the monarch shall not grudge them to thee.

The rice-grains have become a cow,
the sesame has become her calf;
And they shall be, in Yama's realm,
thine inexhaustible support.

Agni, the god of fire, is not less distinctly the medium of communication between men upon earth and the Fathers in the realm of Yama, than between men and the gods. We have already seen that it is he who transports the dead to their new abode; it is also he who calls their spirits back to enjoy the pious attentions lavished upon them; and about his altar they assemble. Thus, in the verse already cited: —

Those Fathers, Agni, all of them,
to eat the offering, hither bring.

He, too, takes charge of the gifts made to the Fathers, and conveys them to those for whom they are destined: —

Thou, for our praises, Agni, all-possessor,
hast borne away our gifts, and made them fragrant;
Hast given them the Fathers: they have eaten:
eat, thou divine one, the set-forth oblations.

Again, accompanying the burnt-offering of a goat: —

When thou hast cooked him thoroughly, O Agni,
then carry him and give him to the Fathers.

With other offerings: —

This cow that I bestow on thee,
and this rice-offering in milk —
With these be thou the man's support
who 's there and lacks the means of life.

In Agni's flame I pour now the oblation,
a plentiful and never-failing fountain;
He shall sustain our fathers, our grandfathers,
our great-grandfathers, too, and keep them hearty.

It would be easy greatly to extend this account by additional citations; but enough has been already presented, it is believed, to illustrate all the main features of the ancient Hindu belief respecting the life after death. Any further passages which might be adduced from the Vedic texts would be of a character akin with these; there is nothing in the Veda which approaches any more nearly to the dogmas of modern days. The Vedas — understanding by that term the original collections of hymns, and not the mass of prose literature which has, later, attached itself to them, and is often included with them under the name of Veda — the Vedas contain not a hint even of the doctrine of transmigration; it is one of the most difficult questions in the religious history of India, how that doctrine arose, out of what it developed, to what feature of the ancient faith it attached itself.

The discordance thus shown to exist, in respect to this single point, between the sacred scriptures of the Hindu and his actual belief, is in no small degree characteristic of their whole relation. The spirit of the primitive

period is altogether different from that of the times which have succeeded; the manners, the creeds, the institutions, which those ancient texts exhibit to us, are not those which we are wont to know as Indian; the whole Brahmanic system is a thing of later growth. And yet the Vedas still remain the professed foundation of the system, and its inspired authority. The fact is a most significant one, as regards both the history of the Hindu religion and culture, and the character of the Hindu mind. It shows that the development of the former has been gradual, and almost unremarked, or at least unacknowledged. There have been in India no violent movements, no sweeping reformations, no lasting and successful rebellions against the constituted authorities, civil and religious, of the nation. The possession and custody of the ancient and inspired hymns laid the foundation of the supremacy of the Brahmans; they have maintained and strengthened their authority, not by adhering pertinaciously to the letter or to the spirit of their scriptures, and attempting to check the natural growth and change of the national character and belief, but rather by falling in with the latter, leading it on, and directing it to their own advantage. Thus, while the sacred texts have been treated with the utmost reverence, and preserved with a care and success which is without a parallel in the history of ancient literatures, they have exerted comparatively very little restraining or guiding influence upon the moral and spiritual development of the people of India. Each new phase of belief has sought in them its authority, has claimed to found itself upon them, and to be consistent with their teachings; and the result is, that the sum of doctrine accepted and regarded as orthodox in modern India is incongruous beyond measure, a mass of inconsistencies. In all this are seen the terrible want of logic, the carelessness of history, the boundless subjectivity, which have ever characterized the Hindu people.

Herein lies no small part of the value and interest, to us, of these venerable relics of a remote antiquity. They exhibit to us the very earliest germs of the Hindu culture, allowing us to follow its history back to a period which is hardly to be reached elsewhere: but this is not all; they are the oldest, the most authentic, the most copious documents for the study of Indo-European archæology and history; and that for the reason that there is so little in them which is specifically Indian; that they are so nearly a reflection of that primitive condition in which there was no distinction of Indian, Persian, and European.

III.

MÜLLER'S HISTORY OF VEDIC LITERATURE.[1]

THIS, the work of one of the foremost Oriental scholars of the present day, upon a subject of high and general interest in the history of literature, well deserves at our hands more than a passing notice.

To the general scholar, Müller is best known by his contributions to historical philology and mythology, and to linguistic ethnology. Especially has the little manual of linguistic and ethnological science published by him some years ago, under the rather uncouth title of "Languages of the Seat of War in the East," done much to diffuse, in England and in this country, valuable information and correct views respecting the affiliations of nations and of languages.[2] Such works, however, have been among his lighter and less engrossing occupations; his main labor has been the elucidation of the earliest period of Indian antiquity — the Vedic — and the publication of the literary monuments by which it is illustrated. Search after manuscripts of the Rig-Veda, and after a publisher willing to assume the great cost and risk of giving it to the world, first brought him to England; and the assistance of Wilson, and the patronage extended

[1] *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, so far as it illustrates the Primitive Religion of the Brahmans.* By Max Müller, M. A., etc. London, Williams & Norgate, 1859. 8vo. Pp. xix., 607.

[2] This was true in 1861. The later works of the same author are too well known to require any notice here.

by the East India Company to his undertaking, fixed him in that country. Of the edition of the text and commentary of the oldest Veda, issued under his careful editorship, three bulky quartos, containing rather more than half of the entire work, have left the press, and the series is still advancing towards its completion; although, unfortunately, much too slowly for the impatience of those who are to make use of it, and who are ready to quarrel with Müller over every hour which he steals, for the benefit of a larger public, from hurrying to its completion the task specially committed to his charge — that of furnishing them with the most important, the most indispensable, of all the works composing the Sanskrit literature.[1] In the preface to his first volume (published in 1849) the learned editor promised the world, as an important aid to the general understanding and appreciation of his work, an introductory memoir on the whole body of the Vedic literature; the volume before us is issued in fulfillment of that promise, circumstances which he explains in his prefatory remarks having necessarily deferred its appearance until this late date. The delay is the less to be regretted, as Professor Müller has had opportunity during the interval to extend his investigations into the subject of which he was to treat, making them both spread wider and penetrate deeper. The vast extent of this literature, the general inaccessibility of its monuments — which exist only in manuscript, and are to be found in but two or three great libraries — and its intricate and difficult character, combine to put the fruits it is capable of yielding out of reach of anything but long-continued and indefatigable study, united with rare penetration, and favored with special opportunity. There is hardly a scholar living who has delved so deep into the mine as Müller, and universal thanks are due him, not only for what he has himself brought to light, but for the

[1] Only one additional volume has appeared during the last eleven years.

ways and adits which he has opened and cleared of obstacles for future laborers.

The object of the work may be summarily stated as follows: to present a general view of the whole Vedic literature; to define its extent; to divide it into well-distinguished classes of writings; to describe the peculiar characters and exhibit the mutual relations of these classes; to portray the circumstances of their origin, and the stage of cultural development which they represent; to explain the method of their preservation and transmission to us; and to determine approximately their chronological period. By accomplishing this, our author desires to vindicate to the Veda the position to which it is justly entitled among the literary records of the human race. Without following him into the details of his investigations, which are calculated to interest rather the special student of Indian archæology than the general reader, we will direct our attention and criticism to some of the main results arrived at by him, and the method by which they are attained.

Professor Müller divides the Vedic literature into three principal classes, the Hymns, the Brâhmanas, and the Sûtras. This is the natural and obvious division which presents itself to the student upon his first nearer acquaintance with the matter which it concerns. It may be traced even in the original essay by Colebrooke[1] which was the commencement of the world's knowledge of the Veda; and it has since been well and clearly drawn out by Weber, in his "Lectures on the History of Indian Literature." The three classes are quite distinct, and even separated from one another by broad and marked lines of division. We will briefly review their chief characteristics.

The Hymns, constituting the bulk of the four collections known as Rig-Veda, Sâma-Veda, Yajur-Veda, and

[1] See above, p. 1, and note.

Atharva-Veda, are the earliest portion, the nucleus, of the whole sacred canon, the root out of which all the rest has grown.[1] They are, in the main, the sacred songs with which, in the infancy of Hindu nationality, at the dawning time of Hindu culture, before the origin of caste, before the birth of Çiva, Vishnu, or Brahma, before the rise of the ceremonialism, the pantheism, the superstition and idolatry of later times, the ancestors of the Hindu people praised the nature-gods in whom they believed, and accompanied and made acceptable their offerings. Written in an obscure and antiquated dialect, as far removed from the classical Sanskrit as is the English of Chaucer from that of the present day; moving in a sphere of life and thought and feeling which is almost primitive in its simplicity; offering fragments of language, of belief, of mythology, which bear a wondrous resemblance to what is earliest in their kind among the traditions of the nations lying westward, even to the Atlantic — they are the most ancient literary memorials of the Indo-European family, and hardly less an authority for Indo-European than for Indian archæology and history. This is especially true of the earliest and principal collection, the Rig-Veda, of more than a thousand hymns, and more than ten thousand stanzas; the Sâma-Veda is a liturgical selection of verses found almost wholly in the former; the Yajur-Veda is an assemblage of parts of hymns and ceremonial formulas used in the sacrifices, and contains much prose, and much matter of a later date, mingled with its more ancient portions; while the Atharvan is, almost throughout, of a more modern origin and of an inferior character, and in its prose passages verges nearly upon the literature of the second class.

The Brâhmanas differ widely from the Hymns, in form and in spirit, and are of a notably later period. They grew up after the Hymns had come to be looked upon as

[1] For a more detailed account of these collections, see above, page 5 *seq.*

inspired and sacred, as the most precious legacy handed down from an earlier age, as containing the whole sum of revealed truth, and as miraculously efficacious in removing sin, winning divine favor, and gaining good fortune and happiness; after their special possession had led to the uprising of a Brahmanic caste, charged with the exclusive ministration, and gifted with the exclusive authority, in all the concerns of religion; after the development of an elaborate ceremonial and ritual, the distinction of the different orders of priests, and the detailed assignment of their respective duties. The Brâhmanas [1] are in prose; they were brought forth in the schools of the Brahmanic priesthood, and contain the lucubrations of the leading caste upon matters theological and ceremonial: dogma, mythology, legend, philosophy, exegesis, explication, etymology, are confusedly mingled together in their pages. While they contain valuable fragments of thought and tradition, they are in general tediously discursive, verbose, and artificial, and in no small part absolutely puerile and inane. There are a considerable number of treatises still extant which bear the title of Brâhmana, and many others, now lost, are found variously cited or referred to. They attach themselves to the different Vedas, or collections of hymns, and emanate from different schools of Vedic study; in part, however, they are only varying versions, current in the different schools, of the same original. They are called by the names of the schools by which they were transmitted, and are ascribed to no personal authors: the Hindu belief

[1] Müller (p. 172) regards the name *brâhmana* as intended to signify that the works in question were composed for and by Brahmans. The accuracy of the explanation admits of question. The word, taken in this sense, seems to mean both too little and too much. On the one hand, the Brâhmanas were claimed to be of divine origin; on the other hand, they were no more the exclusive property of the Brahmanic caste than the other parts of the Vedic literature. We prefer the more usual derivation from *brahman*, taken in the sense of 'worship, mystery of worship;' thus understanding the word to mean 'the sayings or works which have to do with worship.'

regards them — no less than the more ancient Hymns — as revealed. The Hymns and the Brâhmanas together constitute what is called the *çruti*, literally 'audition, hearing;' that is to say, that which was listened to and reported by those to whom the Divinity vouchsafed to make his revelations. Some portions of the Brâhmana literature are confessed to be a more modern appendix to it; they are the so-called forest-treatises (*âranyakas*), or works prepared for the edification of those who have retired to live a life of contemplative solitude and asceticism in the woods — as it is theoretically the duty of every Brahmanic householder to do, after a certain period of life. In the forest-treatises are contained the most ancient and authentic of the Upanishads. This familiar name is employed to designate a class of little philosophico-theological treatises, which have always been the chief intermediaries between the Veda and the modern schools of philosophy and religion, and so have had a greater practical importance for the Hindu people than any other portion of the Vedic literature. In the general estimation, they partake to the fullest extent of the sacred character of a divine revelation, but they are in fact of very heterogeneous origin and date, some of them being even altogether modern.

To illustrate, in a rough way, things unfamiliar by things familiar, we might compare the position and consideration of the Brâhmanas to that of the works of the Fathers in the literature of Christianity. Or, their relation to the text to which they profess to attach themselves is more nearly that of the Talmud to the Hebrew Scriptures; and yet they stand farther removed, in spirit and in time, from the Vedas, than does the Talmud from the Bible. The widest gulf, perhaps, in the history of the Hindu religion and its literature, is that between them and the Hymns; for in them we have already started upon that career of nominal dependence on the Vedas,

but real misapprehension and disregard of their true meaning, which characterizes the whole after course of religious development in India. Of course, then, they are more relied upon and made use of by the speculators and system-makers of after times than the Hymns themselves. Yet they contain no elaborated and consistent system, either of religious or of philosophical doctrine; their dark utterances are pressed into the service of all the sects and schools of the later period.

As has been already noticed, only the Hymns and the Brâhmanas are looked upon as divinely inspired, and to them alone, accordingly, properly belongs the general title of *Veda*, 'knowledge;' taken together, they constitute the complete sum and substance of what best deserves and most requires to be learned. The third class of writings which must still be added to make up the tale of the Vedic literature is of a confessedly subordinate and auxiliary character. It is composed of such works as may be ranked as *vedângas*, 'limbs or members of the Veda.' According to the current Hindu classification, these "members" are six, namely, 1st. Orthoepy, instruction in whatever is necessary to enable the student to utter with the most precise accuracy the verses of the Veda — since a mistake of pronunciation is no less fatal to their acceptance and efficacy than any more essential error in their application; 2d. Prosody, the doctrine of the metres in which the hymns are composed; 3d. Grammar in general, treating of the derivation, formation, and signification of the words of Scripture; 4th. Exegesis, the proper understanding of the texts and the explanation of difficulties of meaning; 5th. Ceremonial, the conduct of the sacrifices, and the employment in them of the hymns and sacred formulas; 6th. Astronomy, the regulation of the calendar, and the determination of the times of sacrifice. Carrying out the figure implied in their common title, these branches of knowledge are styled, respectively, the nose, the feet, the

mouth, the ears, the hands, and the eyes of the Veda. Originally and properly, these are subjects, rather than definite works or classes of works, and receive their illustration both from the Brâhmanas themselves and from any other sources. More lately, however, some of them have certain special treatises allotted to them as their representatives. The fifth Vedânga is the most fully and suitably represented of them all, occupying the principal part of the third class of Vedic writings, the Sûtras.

The word *sûtra* means literally 'string, line:' it is applied to these works either because they are to be regarded as the line or rule to which everything is to be brought, and by which judged, or else because they are a series of brief, connected rules, strung together, as it were. The latter derivation is the one preferred by Müller, and it is well suited to describe their form. In them, by a usage the contrary of that of the Brâhmanas, brevity and conciseness are carried to the farthest possible extreme; lucid arrangement, connection, intelligibility, are all sacrificed to a passion for economizing words. This style of composition, first appearing in the Sûtras, is adopted in whole classes of writings of a later period, as in the fundamental treatises of the philosophical schools, and in the text-books of grammar; the standard work of Pânini, the grammarian-in-chief of Sanskrit literature, is a frightfully perfect model of the *sûtra* method. The Sûtras are of several kinds. The so-called *çrauta-sûtras* explain the grand and public religious rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices, founding themselves, as their name denotes, more especially upon the *çruti*, or revelation. The *grihya-sûtras* (from *griha*, 'house') deal with the domestic and private religious duties of the householder — such as those which must be performed at the birth of a child, at his investiture with the Brahmanic cord, at marriage, at sepulture, and the like. And there is still another class, the *sâmayâchârika-sûtras*, distinguished by Müller from

the *grihya-sûtras*, with which they have ordinarily been confounded, which concern general duty and behavior, the right conduct of life. Out of these have grown, later, the metrical law-books, as the famous Laws of Manu, which are still accepted in India as the rule of right between man and man. A familiar and comprehensive name for all this department of literature is *smriti*, 'remembrance;' that is, what is handed down by ordinary tradition from the ancient teachers. Though not looked upon as of divine origin, the Sûtras are regarded with the highest respect and veneration, as authoritative expositions of right and duty. As, in its early portions, this literature verges somewhat upon the later productions of the Brâhmana period, so its limit in the other direction, the line which separates it from works not to be reckoned as Vedic, is a rather evanescent one. Important among the works belonging to the *sûtra* division, yet not included under the denomination *sûtra* taken in its narrower sense, are the *prâtiçâkhyas*, little treatises on phonetics, details of pronunciation and reading, and peculiarities of external form, which attach themselves to the different hymn-texts; they constitute, probably, the earliest distinctively grammatical literature in existence, and exhibit a very remarkable acuteness of apprehension, and subtlety of distinction, in matters phonetical. The *anukramanîs*, or detailed indices to the texts, giving their divisions, the length, author, and theme of each hymn, and the metre of every verse, also deserve special mention. Both these classes of works are of very essential service in throwing light upon the critical history of the different collections.

We need not go farther in describing the Vedic literature; enough has been said to give a view of it which is sufficiently distinct for our present purpose. We could not, without entering into details altogether unsuited to a paper like this, do justice to the erudition and acuteness of combination displayed by our author in treating of the

classification and description of this literature, in his excerption from it of valuable notices, and his determination of the character, origin, and mutual relations of the various works of which it is composed. There are few other scholars living who can walk with so firm and confident a step through the whole wide-extended field of the Hindu sacred lore, a field hitherto almost pathless in its obscurities, and in great part unattractive in its barrenness.

We may next follow Professor Müller in his attempt to establish a chronological groundwork for the Vedic literature. How extremely delicate and difficult a task this is wont to be in matters affecting the literary history of India, is sufficiently known to all who have had any occasion to deal with the subject. What wild and baseless theories respecting the dates of events, and the periods of works, or classes of works, in Hindu antiquity, have been built up and accepted, only to be overthrown again and forgotten! But also, what learned and cautious conclusions upon like subjects have been drawn by critical scholars, to be proved fallacious and set aside by farther research! It can scarcely be said that there is a single Sanskrit work, not of quite modern authorship, in existence, whatever be its prominence and importance, as to the period of which there reigns not an uncertainty to be measured by centuries. The one reliable date which we possess for Indian history, until times long posterior to the Christian era, is furnished by the Greek accounts of the Indian sovereign "Sandrocottus," contemporary of the early successors of Alexander. That this is the king called by the Hindus Chandragupta, the founder of a new dynasty upon the Ganges, there can be no reasonable doubt; luckily the prominence of his grandson, Açoka, in Buddhist history, as the Constantine of Buddhism, the first who gave that religion supremacy in India, has led to the preservation of such trustworthy accounts of him

as to permit the satisfactory identification of the two personages. This datum is well styled by our author the sheet-anchor of Indian chronology; without it we should be, even respecting the most important eras of Indian history, drifting almost hopelessly at sea. If there has been, besides this, any date in which nearly all students of Hindu archæology have acquiesced, agreeing to regard it as satisfactorily established, it has been that of the death of Buddha, as supposed to be fixed by the Buddhists of Ceylon at B. C. 543. But, in the work now under consideration, Professor Müller attacks with powerful arguments the authenticity and credibility of this date also: he points out that the Ceylon data, if compared with and corrected by the Greek era of Chandragupta, indicate rather 477 than 543 B. C. as Buddha's death-year; and he argues further that the data themselves contain an artificial and arbitrary element which destroys their faith; and that back of the great synod under Açoka, about 250 B. C., we really know nothing of the chronology of Buddhism. From this conclusion we do not ourselves feel inclined to dissent; the considerations adduced by Müller as the ground of his skepticism are not easily to be set aside; and we have been taught, by long and sad experience, that a Hindu date is not a thing that one can clutch and hold. But while we pay our author homage in his character of Çiva the Destroyer, we cannot show him equal reverence when he acts the part of Brahma the Constructor; for the basis of evidence on which he founds his system of chronology for the Vedic literature seems to us far less substantial than that which has been relied upon to establish the date of Buddha's entrance upon nihility. Let us briefly review his reasonings. He begins with laying down as strongly as possible the marked distinctness of the periods represented by the three principal classes of the Vedic literature, showing that each class necessarily presupposes the

existence and full development of that which precedes it; as regards the two later classes, he dwells upon the native distinction of them as *çruti* and *smriti*, 'revelation' and 'tradition,' respectively, contending that this implies a recognition of the latter as of notably later origin than the other. He further divides the period of the Hymns into two, that of their composition and that of their collection and arrangement: the former he styles the *chhandas* period, the period of spontaneous poetic productiveness; the latter is the *mantra* period, that in which this poetry had become invested with a conventional and adscititious character — had become *mantra*, 'sacred formula.' To such a division no Vedic scholar will refuse assent; the wide difference, in time and in character, between the singers and the diaskeuasts of the hymns has long been recognized, and has only failed to be marked by a suitable and happy nomenclature; that proposed by our author will probably henceforth be generally adopted. Professor Müller thus establishes four chronological steps, or separate and successive epochs of time; and, save that we may regard it as still uncertain how far these periods have interlaced with, or even slightly overlapped one another, we find nothing in his method to criticise. But now, in order to obtain a starting-point in time, from which to reckon the series backward, Müller in the first place adopts as sufficiently established the current date of the grammarian Pânini, as a contemporary of the sovereign Nanda, who ruled in Hindustan not long before Chandragupta, or in the fourth century before Christ. This contemporaneousness rests solely upon the authority of a passage in a wild and extravagant tale, one of a collection of such tales, a kind of Hindu Arabian Nights' Entertainments, gathered in their present form about the twelfth century after Christ. Müller, like others before him, seeks to recognize in the passage in question a fragment of genuine tradition. We cannot agree

with him in attributing to it with any confidence such a character. It looks to us far more like an arbitrary interweaving of some of the great names of antiquity into a fanciful story. Our author himself says (p. 300): "Nowhere except in Indian history should we feel justified in ascribing any weight to the vague traditions contained in popular stories which were written down more than a thousand years after the event." But if nowhere else, then *à fortiori* not in India; for surely there is no other country where tradition and fiction are so entangled with one another, where *quasi* traditions have been more deliberately manufactured by wholesale, where it is so hard to tell whether we have before us at any given time a popular historical reminiscence or the arbitrary figment of an individual — where, indeed, the latter is so capable of taking on the appearance, and fulfilling the functions, of the former. Were there other distinct evidences to the same effect, this might be worthy to be brought in as corroboratory; as the main basis of a whole chronological system, it is, to our apprehension, of no value. In order, next, to make out a synchronism between Pânini and some part of the Vedic literature, our author accepts the identification of a Kâtyâyana who is said to have made corrective additions to Pânini's grammar with a Kâtyâyana to whom are ascribed certain works of the *sûtra* class. Here, we think, is another fatally weak point in the chain of reasoning. The identification is made by a Hindu commentator of late date; and this is testimony of which, for the reasons already stated, we greatly suspect the worth and credibility. We know the laxity of the tradition of authorship in India, whose literature consists in great part of works either anonymous or ascribed to clearly false and fictitious authors; we know the tendency to attach numerous compositions to certain prominent names; and we recognize the name of Kâtyâyana as one of this class. It may not be quite

impossible that the same individual should have written all the various works which are ascribed to him; but it is at least highly improbable, and not sufficiently vouched by any evidence as yet brought forward. A date which reposes upon such asserted authorship, as connected by a fairy story with the period of a certain monarch, is to us no date at all, but only a possibility; and hence we regard our author's determination of the period of the *sûtra* literature as 600–200 B. C. as a mere conjectural hypothesis, which is not fairly entitled even to temporary and provisional acceptance. He is careful at the outset not to put it forth as anything more than this; thus, he says (p. 241): "It will readily be seen how entirely hypothetical all these arguments are." But the farther he goes on in building up the superstructure, the more he is willing to forget the weakness of the foundation; sixty pages later (p. 300), he tells us respecting the date of Chandragupta that it "enables us to fix chronologically an important period in the literature of India, the Sûtra period," and thenceforth his readers are not encouraged to keep in mind his earlier warnings.

Support is sought to be obtained for the epoch 600–200 B. C. from a relation of the *sûtra* style to the history of Buddhism; as if the abandonment of the old discursive and assuming tone of the Brâhmanas for the conciseness of the early Sûtras had been due to the rise and spread of the new doctrine, which compelled the Brahmans to bate their arrogance, and seek to maintain themselves by adopting a more intelligible and acceptable method of instruction; and as if the weakness and slovenliness of the latest fragments of the literature of the fourth period told of the decay of Brahmanic learning in the days of Buddhistic supremacy. The theory exhibits acuteness, and is not altogether wanting in plausibility; but it has not convincing force, and itself needs support, instead of being able to prop up effectively another hypothesis which has not strength to stand alone.

Adopting 600–200 B. C. as the period of the *sûtra* literature, our author assumes that each of the two which preceded it may have lasted for a couple of centuries, and accordingly suggests as the epoch of the composition of the Vedic hymns the time prior to 1000 B. C.; or, if to it be assigned the same length as to the two preceding epochs, 1200–1000 B. C. To this date for the beginnings of Hindu history and culture no one will deny at least the merit of extreme modesty and caution; it stands in this respect in most refreshing contrast with the theorizings of many others who have had occasion to treat the same point. The era of the Vedic poets is more likely to have preceded, even considerably, the time thus allotted to it, than to have been more modern. In the present state of the investigation, we can only say that nothing has yet been brought to light which should prove it to lie within two or three centuries of any given point; the calculations and conjectures of Professor Müller cannot be looked upon as having in any essential manner contributed to the final settlement of the question. Doubtless he would himself make no such pretensions in their favor; but he is in danger of being misunderstood as doing so; we have already more than once seen it stated that "Müller has ascertained the date of the Vedas to be 1200–1000 B. C.," or to that effect. Hence we have felt the more called upon to bring out as plainly as possible the true state of the case — that he has neither attempted nor accomplished more than this: by confining himself to a single method of inquiry, and taking the best evidence which offered itself within its limits, to conjecture an approximate period for the Vedic history, one against the assumption of which no powerful hostile evidence is derivable from the Sanskrit literature, so far as known to us at present. It is, upon the whole, clear that a final positive determination of the controversy, if ever attained, must be arrived at, not by following any

one clew, however faithfully and perseveringly, but by carefully combining all evidences, whether literary, historical, astronomical, or of whatever other character they may be. Professor Müller can by no means be blamed for adhering to the general methods of his work, and refraining from entering upon those other lines of inquiry; but we should have been better satisfied if he had guarded against misapprehension by at least referring to their existence, and their indispensableness to the full solution of his problem.[1]

To our knowledge of the method of preservation and tradition of the Vedic literature, Professor Müller's contributions are of very high value and importance; upon many points in this intricate and difficult subject he has thrown a vastly clearer light. It is a well known fact, that we have before us the text of the Vedic hymns, as handed down from a remoteness of date, and with a perfection of preservation, which, taken together, are truly wonderful. Müller, indeed, is of opinion that the great collection of the Rig-Veda, with its 10,500 double verses, can be fully proved to have been in existence — of its present extent, with its present arrangement, and in precisely its present form — since at least 800 B. C.;

[1] Other rather striking instances have attracted our attention in the course of the work, where our author has, as if on principle, limited himself to a single kind of evidence bearing upon a point which he is discussing (generally the direct testimony of Indian commentators, or such like authority), while ignoring the existence of other evidence of a more unequivocal kind. We will cite an example. When speaking of one of the Prâtiçâkhyas, that of the Atharva-Veda, he leaves his readers (p. 139) to understand that it is proved to belong to the Atharvan by its introductory phrase — probably no integral part of the work itself — by the citation of one of its rules by the commentator of another Prâtiçâkhya, and by a not very significant reference to Atharvan sacrifices in a passage of its own commentary. Whereas, in fact, the work is so full of citations from and references to the text which is its subject, that it is shown to belong to the Atharva-Veda quite in the same way as a copy of Stuart's Commentary on Daniel, for instance, might be proved, with its title-page and preface torn out, to concern itself with the Book of Daniel. If the collection known and published as the Atharva-Veda be entitled to that name, this cannot possibly be **any other** work than the Atharva-Veda Prâtiçâkhya.

and there appears no reason to regard the claim as unfounded or exaggerated. And this vast body of popular poetry is placed in our hands in a state of perfect keeping, without any corruptions or various readings which deserve mention. The external means and appliances by the help of which so remarkable a result has been attained — the apparatus of different text-forms, grammars of peculiarities of reading, indexes of subject and metre, and the like — are for the most part well known, and some of them have been referred to by us above; the internal economy of the great system of tradition and study, by which these means were originated and made to subserve their purpose, has been much harder of comprehension. Each of the Vedic texts which we possess presents itself to us as the *textus receptus* of a "school" of Vedic study, as the peculiar property of that school, and as called by its name; and although we have, of three of the collections, but a single text, emanating from a single school, we yet read of other texts and other schools; while of the Yajur-Veda we find at least four schools, represented each by its text, the texts exhibiting decided differences of reading and arrangement. Respecting the Rig-Veda, we have information that certain of its schools differed from one another only in accepting as canonical, or rejecting as the contrary, a few supplementary hymns which the manuscripts give us; further than this, we are left to conjecture and inference. Our author gathers up all the notices which he has been able to glean from Hindu authorities respecting the various schools and their affiliations and relations, and presents a more complete statistical picture of them, and gives distincter and more intimate views of their character and workings, than have ever before been made known. He supposes that some of them were founded upon differences in the received texts of the original hymn-collections, and that these were the oldest to which the name "school of

the Veda" was applied; that others, of later origin, accepted the same text, but disagreed as to the Brâhmana which they connected with it — although, even here, he finds no reason to believe in the existence of originally distinct Brâhmanas, but only of varying versions, with some additions or retrenchments, of one and the same primary text; still other schools he regards as founded upon differences in the Sûtras adopted, while they agree in both hymn-text and Brâhmana. This whole condition of things he explains by the method of tradition through which he conceives that the Vedas and their attendant literature were handed down, for centuries after the collection of the former, and during the whole period of origination of the latter. The method was, according to him, exclusively oral, the art of writing having been throughout unknown or unused. In a text so preserved, differences of reading could not, of course, help creeping in unnoticed among the schools of the Brahmanic priesthood; and when these differences were brought to light by comparison, each text would be stoutly adhered to, and defended as true and original, by those whose property it was. Professor Müller makes the happily illustrative comparison of each *çâkhâ*, or *textus receptus* of a school, to a special and slightly peculiar edition of the original collection, and likens the different members of the school, or *charana*, to the copies constituting the edition; each edition, then, either became by degrees extinct, by the destruction of all its copies — that is to say, by the death without successor of the members of the school — or it was kept in existence by their renewal, as the place of each generation was filled by new disciples, who had spent the best years of their youth in learning by heart the sacred texts, with a persevering labor, a minute care, and a grasp and retentiveness of memory, of which we find it difficult to form an adequate conception.

This is evidently a view as startling as it is new. We have already above seen reason to wonder at the remarkable preservation, during so many ages, of the early Vedic literature; how immensely must our wonder be increased, if we are to believe that the preservation was accomplished, until a comparatively very recent period, by dint of memory alone! that not only were the primitive hymns produced by an age which knew no letters, and long handed down by oral tradition — which no one has ever questioned — but that they were collected, classified, arranged, divided and subdivided by different methods; that there grew up, as attached to them, the voluminous prose literature of the Brâhmanas, a literature of style most unsuited to preservation by memory, being insufferably discursive, prolix, and tedious; that the texts became the subjects of a most minute and penetrating objective study; that a phonetical science, nowhere else surpassed, busied itself with the minutest details of their reading and pronunciation; that a formal and etymological grammar arose out of the comparison of their dialect with that of common life; and all without the help of any written record, but by the means solely of oral teaching, memorial retention, and internal rumination and study; — this, if true, is certainly one of the very strangest and most wonderful phenomena which the history of universal literature has to offer, and must very seriously modify some of the general laws hitherto laid down with regard to the period and method of origin of ancient literatures.

The evidence upon which Professor Müller relies to prove his thesis — besides the fact that it seems best to explain the mode of activity of the ancient schools of the Veda — is, mainly, the absence of any allusions to books, letters, or writing in the whole body of Vedic works, and the evident assumption made by even the latest of them, that all instruction is to be given and received only by the mouth and ear. The fact of this absence must be

conceded; Müller is entitled to speak with authority upon the point, nor has any one been able to bring forward a reference or citation which militates against his statements. It would seem that, if anywhere in the Vedic literature, evidence of a knowledge of the art of writing ought to be discovered in the Prâtiçâkhyas, which deal with the peculiarities and irregularities of the hymn-texts, and with all the niceties of utterance, and which exhibit a developed grammatical terminology; but it is certainly not there to be found. Among all their technical terms there is not one which implies the existence of a written sign for the spoken sound; not one of their rules is so framed as to apply only to a recorded text. Our author calls attention to the repeated allusions in the Hebrew scriptures to books and writing; he refers to the revolutions caused in the literatures of other nations by the introduction of the use of letters; and he asks, with much apparent reason, whether it can be supposed that no such allusions should be found in the Hindu literature, were the art of writing known during the periods of its growth; or that such an event as its invention or communication could supervene between the beginning and end of the Vedic epoch without leaving its evident traces on the contemporary literature. Any objection which we might be inclined to make on the score of the impossibility that the Brahmanic memory should have been capable of bearing such a burden so long and so well, or the Brahmanic mind able to work so actively and produce so much under its load, he anticipates, by pleading that we are not authorized to judge the capacity of the ancient Hindu memory by what our own can do, demoralized as it is by long habits of reliance upon records; he alludes to the extraordinary instances of power of verbal memory of which we sometimes read among uncultivated peoples; he insists upon the single devotion of the Brahman student to the work of acquiring the traditional literature of his school,

the long continuance of his student life — which may extend itself to forty-eight years in the case of one who makes sacred learning his life's business — and the demonstrably oral character of the instruction given in the schools of the priesthood, down even to a very recent date.

We do not, however, feel content to have the consideration of possibility ruled summarily out of the discussion of this question. We may consent to waive our claim to interpose a plea of absolute and utter impossibility, admitting of no argument, to quash our author's case; but it would be most unreasonable in us not to bear in mind that the difficulty attending his view is so great that it verges closely upon impossibility, and gives us a right to take refuge in almost any other tolerable theory, though itself beset with difficulties of its own. To our own mind, we confess, the improbability of Professor Müller's views is overwhelming; we cannot deem them sufficiently fortified even by the powerful negative evidence which he adduces in their support. The obscurity which rests over so much of the political, institutional, and literary history of India weighs in full measure upon the history of writing also, the source, the period, the method of its introduction into the peninsula, and its extension there. There is, so far as we know, an utter absence even of tradition upon the subject. The earliest existing written monuments in India to which a date can be assigned are the inscriptions of the Buddhist monarch Açoka, which come down to us from the middle of the third century before Christ. The Sanskrit had then already ceased to be the language of the people, and these edicts are composed in Prakritic dialects. Weber has endeavored to show that the earliest alphabet exhibits signs of derivation from Semitic forms of writing, and that, accordingly, like almost all other known modes of written speech, it traces its origin ultimately to the

venerable Phœnician; and, considering the antecedent probabilities of the case, the evidence collected is sufficient to make the conclusion a very plausible one; more than that could hardly be claimed in its favor. The testimony of the Greeks, of Alexander's time and later, is unfortunately by no means so clear and unequivocal upon this point as were desirable, and has by different writers been understood to indicate that the Hindus did, and that they did not, have the use of letters at that period. Professor Müller's interpretation of it, as set forth in his present work, seems to us doubtless the true one: namely, that letters were plainly in use, and that not as a thing of late introduction; but that in practical employment they were restricted, and that in the important and serious matter of the administration of justice no recourse was had to written codes, judgment being pronounced upon memorial authorities alone. We are to believe, our author says, that the ancient Hindus possessed the art of writing, but did not apply it to literary purposes. This may perhaps be correctly paraphrased by saying that in the ordinary and practical concerns of life letters were gladly resorted to, but that they were neglected by the wise and learned, or by the literary and priestly caste, and ignored in connection with the higher classes of literature, especially the sacred: which is very nearly our own view of the whole matter. Something of this strange condition of things, this refusal to allow the claim of letters to be admitted into good society, is to be traced even down to a late period in Indian literature. Our author's estimate of the date of the great grammarian Pânini compels him to admit that to that author the art of writing must have been known; yet in his whole work there can be found but one single word which seems to imply such a knowledge; his grammar is founded upon, and executed in, the assumption of a literature wholly memorized, no less than the Vedic treatises — some of

which, according to Professor Müller, are of a yet later date than Pânini. This fact greatly impairs the force of one of our author's arguments, already noticed by us: letters certainly have been brought into use, if not earlier known, during the latter part of the Vedic period, without making an era, altering the former literary methods, or even obtaining distinct recognition on the part of the learned. Such recognition, indeed, in connection with the sacred literature, they were never able to win. Müller cites from various sources the curses pronounced against those who shall presume to write the Veda, or cause it to be written; and all religious instruction is declared worthless, or even positively sinful, which is derived from written sources. That would be a highly curious investigation which should determine just how much of the existing Sanskrit literature — exclusive of that of a quite late date, or of a decidedly popular character — clearly acknowledges the existence of an alphabet, or method of writing; and we think that it would develop some rather startling results. We know that there are complete astronomical treatises extant, from which one would be authorized to draw the conclusion, by Professor Müller's method, that the Hindus among whom they originated could neither write nor cipher: perhaps he would endeavor to convince us that, after all, the thing were not impossible: do we not now and then meet with mathematical prodigies, who can work out by an unassisted mental operation the most abstruse and complicated problems?

It is not very difficult to conjecture a reason why the Brahmans may, while acquainted with letters, have rigorously ignored them, and interdicted their confessed use, in connection with the sacred literature. The Brahman priesthood was originally a class only, which grew into a close hereditary caste on the strength, mainly, of their special possession of the ancient hymns, and their knowledge

of how these were to be employed with due effect in the various offices of religion. The hymns had unquestionably long been handed down by oral tradition, from generation to generation, in the custody of certain families or branches of the caste; each family having chiefly in its charge the lyrics which its own ancestors had first sung. These were their most treasured possession, the source of their influence and authority. It might, then, naturally enough be feared that, if committed to the charge of written documents, when writing came to be known and practised among the more cultivated of the people — a class which could not be entirely restricted to the Brahmanic caste — and if suffered to be openly copied and circulated, passed from hand to hand, examined by profane eyes, the sacred texts would become the property of the nation at large, and the Brahmanic monopoly of them be broken down. If, on the contrary, the old method of oral instruction alone in sacred things were rigidly kept up, if all open and general use of written texts were strictly forbidden, it is clear that the schools of Brahmanic theology would flourish, and remain the sole medium of transmission of the sacred knowledge, and that the doctrines and rites of religion would be kept under the control of the caste. Thus, while oral tradition continued to be the exoteric practice, writing might still be resorted to esoterically; collections might be made and arranged, treatises composed, texts compared and studied, by the initiated, while the results were communicated to the schools by oral teaching, and memorized by the neophytes.

We would not put this theory forward with too much confidence, as affording a sufficient and satisfactory explanation of all the facts involved in the question at issue;[1] but it seems to us at any rate less inadmissible than

[1] Quite similar views have been brought forward by Böhtlingk. See *Mélanges Asiatiques*, iii. 715 *seq.* (St. Petersburg, 1859).

the utter exclusion of aid from written documents which Müller postulates for the entire Vedic literature. We have clearly a strange matter here to deal with, and any solution of it can hardly fail to be attended with difficulties. But it appears from our author's own showing that the art of writing must have been known before the end of the Vedic period, while nevertheless not even the latest of the Vedic treatises acknowledges it, and while both the sacred and the higher secular literature long continue to ignore it. Hence, the principal question is to determine at what period, earlier or later, it actually came in; and all that we are solicitous here to establish is, that there is no insuperable obstacle yet placed in the way of our admitting its presence at any period later than that of the hymns, to explain what without it may be found unexplainable in the production and preservation of the Vedic literature. Further familiarity with that literature will help to settle the point; and now that it has been brought so prominently forward, we may expect that other students of the Veda will contribute their aid to its full elucidation.

As our author's purpose is to give a general survey of the whole Vedic literature, not an exhaustive analysis and exhibition of any part of it, he enters but slightly upon a subject which he is one of those best qualified by the course of his studies to discuss, and which many of his readers are doubtless disappointed that he did not undertake to treat more fully — the subject, namely, of the internal character and contents of the early hymns, and the results derivable from them for the history of ideas and institutions in India, and of religious and social institutions in the Indo-European family. For this, not a chapter in a work, but a whole work, and one of no small volume, would be required, with a detail in the handling of the sources which would be unsuitable to a work like the present, intended for the general reader.

It might well seem premature, too, to set about such a task, when so few of the preliminary labors have been accomplished, when only a half of the most important text of all has yet been put within the reach of scholars, and when no translation of any continuous and extensive portion of that text has been made public, upon whose faithfulness to the letter and the spirit of the original reliance can be placed — for both the translation of Langlois, and, in a less degree, that of Wilson, are far from justifying any such reliance. We should be thankful for what Professor Müller finds occasion and opportunity to give us in the closing sections of his work: there, in the course of his defense and establishment of the distinction which he makes of the epoch of the hymns into two separate periods — that of their composition and that of their collection, or the *chhandas* and the *mantra* periods, spoken of above — we receive many valuable hints or expressions of opinion respecting the origin of the three older collections, with intimations of the characteristics which may be relied upon to help distinguish ancient from modern hymns, and translations of chosen and representative examples of both classes of hymns. These translations are not perhaps so life-like and spirited as a native command of English joined to our author's appreciation of their originals might have made them, but they are in advance of any which the English language has hitherto known, and more readable, as well as more accurate and truthful, than those of Wilson. Some of the views put forth respecting the comparative age and the interdependence of the collections are discordant with those which have thus far prevailed, and we do not feel prepared to accept them without a fuller exhibition of the grounds upon which they rest; but we will not run the risk of wearying our readers with the discussion of questions in which they might feel but slight interest.

There is, however, one point of fundamental impor-

tance in which our author disagrees with those who have studied the Veda before him, and in respect to which we are so far from accepting his views that we cannot help dwelling upon it a little: it is no less than the original groundwork of the Vedic religion — whether it be monotheistic or polytheistic. It has been generally held that the religion represented by the genuine ancient hymns of the Veda was an almost pure naturè-religion, a nearly unmixed worship of the deities regarded as residing in and manifesting themselves through the more striking phenomena of the material world; and that the monotheistic conceptions here and there discoverable in parts of the texts were of decidedly later growth, the first fruits of that theosophic philosophy which in after times so absorbed the Hindu mind. To this Professor Müller objects: he refuses us the right to pronounce monotheistic ideas and far-reaching metaphysical speculations proofs of the later origin of the hymns in which they appear, and maintains that both are as primitive and ancient as any of the records of Hindu thought. He acknowledges that the dim and imperfect recognition of one sole divinity which we see appear in the best age of Greek philosophy worked itself out from amid the polytheism, anthropomorphism, and idolatry of the earlier time, but asks how we know that the course of thought was the same in India; since — though a belief in a supreme God, a God above all gods, may seem abstractly later than a belief in many gods — if a single poet do but feel his filial relationship to the Divine, and utter, "though it be thoughtlessly, the words, 'My father,'" he has overleaped the long interval to monotheism. Our author adds (p. 559): "There is a monotheism that precedes the polytheism of the Veda, and even in the invocations of their innumerable gods the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the mist of an idolatrous phraseology, like the blue sky that is hidden by

passing clouds." And he had said in a previous passage (p. 528) :—

"In the Veda . . . . we look in vain for the effect produced on the human mind by the first rising of the idea of God. . . . . We shall never hear what was felt by man when the image of God arose in all its majesty before his eyes, assuming a reality before which all other realities faded away into a mere shadow. . . . . That first recognition of God, that first perception of the real presence of God, — a perception without which no religion, whether natural or revealed, can exist or grow, — belonged to the past when the songs of the Veda were written. The idea of God, though never entirely lost, had been clouded over by errors. The names given to God had been changed to gods, and their real meaning had faded away from the memory of man."

We are a little at a loss how to understand some of these expressions of our author, or to see what view of the origin of religions is implied in them. It almost seems as if he held that a conception of God, clothed in all the dignity, majesty, and overpowering grandeur of the Christian conception, as it falls upon the mind of a devout person in his moments of fullest apprehension, was capable of bursting at once upon the spirit of one to whom the very idea of a God had hitherto been a stranger; and that, too, not by a miraculous communication to a miraculously prepared soul, but by a natural process, the mind accepting the evidences placed before it in the works of creation, and drawing inferences from them, with the powers and instincts which constitute its proper endowment. This, or anything approaching it, we regard as quite impossible; we cannot believe that any race has shown itself capable of arriving at such a result except through a long course of development and training, a gradual rising from lower and more sensuous to higher, more abstract, and purer views. There is a fallacy in the assertion that no religion can begin without a perception of the real presence of God — unless, indeed, the word "religion" be understood in a very restricted sense.

Substitute for "God" the phrase "superhuman or supernatural power or powers," and the proposition commands assent; but call it "God," and we cannot help investing the word with a significance which in such a connection does not belong to it; we fill it with our own educated conceptions and associations. It is hardly possible to imagine a race, gifted with the average capacity of human nature, existing long without a religion, after thought and language have passed the most rudimentary stages of development. There are, it is true, tribes now on the face of the earth, whose dwarfed and groveling minds have never raised themselves far enough above an utter absorption in the petty interests of animal existence to heed or interpret the evidences of anything outside of man and greater and mightier than he; but these are the rare exceptions. Hardly a people that walks erect and looks abroad can fail to be impressed with a sense of the superhuman; it is forced upon any but the dullest perception, by the sky, the storm, the changing seasons, the heavenly bodies, and all those other powers in action about us, with the personifications of which nature-religions are wont to be crowded. And — setting aside in any case the supposition of a miraculous enlightenment and revelation — we hold that the recognition of a diversity of causes as manifested in these diverse effects is so much the more natural and easier, and the apprehension of a unity existing under the diversity so plainly later, and the result of reflection, comparison, and combination, that we cannot conceive of a monotheism, of natural origin, not preceded by and growing out of a polytheism. To suppose the human spirit gifted with such clear and penetrating intuitions as to apprehend directly the unity of Nature and its Author, and yet so weak and blind as to be able to forget that original cognition, and lose itself in the vagaries of naturalism, anthropomorphism, and superstitious worship of idols, is not only to invert the actual

evidence of the history of religions, but also to lessen the dignity and value of human nature, which it was the intention of the theory to uphold. We should never expect, then, to witness in any recorded literature the uprising of that idea of God which is the necessary foundation of all religion: it is forbidden by the very nature of the case; for this idea must be far older than the time at which a nation begins to sing songs worthy of being handed down to posterity. But on the other hand, as in the history of Greek philosophy may be seen the coming into being of that idea of God which contemplates him as one and infinite, so may it, as we believe, be also seen in the hymns of the Veda. We are unable to understand what Professor Müller refers to when he says that in the ancient Hindu religion the names given to God have been changed to gods: the names of the Vedic divinities are not the epithets of one God; they are the names of objects and effects in nature. And why should we be forbidden to apply to the Hindu religion results derived from the history of the Greek? They are confessedly, by origin, the same religion; if the one has had to arrive at an imperfect monotheism by the way of philosophic speculation, why not the other also? No one will question that the Greek, Persian, and Indian branches of the Indo-European family have once, as one people, spoken the same language and held the same belief; the evidence of comparative philology and comparative mythology — which no one has presented in a clearer and more attractive form than our author — is decisive upon that point. All have later made approximations to monotheism: the Greek but weakly and sporadically; the Persian, by a moral, an anti-naturalistic revolution or reform, gave birth to a faith distinguished for its purity, and its nearness to the simple grandeur of Semitic conceptions; the Hindu followed another course, and attained, indeed, to a speculative monotheism, but to one of a

barren and shadowy character. The Hindu supreme God is as remote as possible from being a realization of the idea "my father;" he is set far beyond Olympus, on the highest and most inaccessible alpine summits of a chilling and cheerless solitude, separated by a whole series of demiurges from all care of the universe or participation in the concerns of his creatures. It is not impossible to distinguish between reminiscences of an older and purer faith, and the budding germs of a new doctrine: the former we see appearing here and there among the subtilties of the later religion of the Brahmans; the latter only are we able to recognize in the scattered indications of monotheistic conceptions discoverable in the earliest records of Hindu religious thought. The great mass of the Vedic hymns are absorbed in the praise and worship of the multifarious deities of the proper Vedic pantheon, and ignore all conception of a unity of which these are to be accounted the varying manifestations; others, in which language, style, and thought often concur to prove their later origin, exhibit the beginnings of just those philosophical and theological speculations which later helped to sweep away the whole fabric of the old Vedic religion, annihilating its spirit, and leaving only its names and its ceremonial forms.

Professor Müller has deserved, and often received, the meed of general praise for the attractive manner in which he is accustomed to work up the subjects which he treats; for his attention, not alone to clearness and readiness of apprehension by his readers — qualities too often neglected by those whose studies reach so deeply, and concern themselves with subjects so obscure and recondite — but also to the graces and ornaments of style. To this commendation his present work likewise is in a high degree entitled; many will doubtless be led on to peruse it, and won over to an interest in its theme, who would have been repelled, had its learned discussions been conducted

with less art, and clothed in plainer and more rigid forms. In some instances, however, we think that he has been led too far in this direction — has given too loose a rein to poetic fancy, and talked in tropes and pictures when more exact scientific statement had been preferable. Especially is this true of the early portion of the book, where he is discussing the migrations and ethnological relations of races, and the differences of national characteristics. We cite below one rather noteworthy instance: —

"The main stream of the Aryan nations has always flowed towards the northwest. No historian can tell us by what impulse those adventurous Nomads were driven on through Asia towards the isles and shores of Europe . . . . But whatever it was, the impulse was as irresistible as the spell which, in our own times, sends the Celtic tribes towards the prairies or the regions of gold across the Atlantic. It requires a strong will, or a great amount of inertness, to be able to withstand the impetus of such national, or rather ethnical movements. Few will stay behind when all are going. But to let one's friends depart, and then to set out ourselves — to take a road which, lead where it may, can never lead us to join those again who speak our language and worship our gods — is a course which only men of strong individuality and great self-dependence are capable of pursüing. It was the course adopted by the southern branch of the Aryan family, the Brahmanic Aryas of India and the Zoroastrians of Iran." — P. 12.

Had not our author, when he wrote this paragraph, half unconsciously in mind the famous and striking picture of Kaulbach at Berlin, representing the scattering of the human race from the foot of the ruined tower of Babel; where we see each separate nationality, with the impress of its after character and fortunes already stamped on every limb and feature, taking up its line of march toward the quarter of the earth which it is destined to occupy? It is a bold allegorical representation; almost too bold for painting, indeed; still more doubtfully admissible as poetry; but least of all to be put forth as scientific truth. We cannot consent to regard the division of the Indo-European stock into separate tribes, the germs of future independent nations, as a conscious process, one in which

each division remained cognizant of the wanderings and fates of the others, and chose its own future course from deliberate purpose. It is more than we can fairly ask of our imaginations to show us the Aryan race perched for a couple of thousand years upon some exalted post of observation, watching thence the successive departure from their ancient homes of the various European tribes, and then, in a spirit of lofty independence, not to say perversity, setting out deliberately to try its fortunes in the opposite direction.

In the same introductory chapters our author describes, for the most part in a true and telling manner, some of the peculiarities which distinguish the Hindus from all others of the Indo-European races, almost from all others of the human family — their quietism, their tendency to look within instead of without for truth and knowledge, their carelessness of things sublunary, their longing to escape from the trammels of existence. But we are not without suspicion sometimes that he accounts his description an explanation also, and we note here and there the tendency, already pointed out, to substitute figurative and rhetorical phrases for close thought and clear statement. Thus, he speaks of the Hindus as shutting themselves up within the lofty mountain boundaries of their peninsula, to dwell there undisturbed for many centuries by foreign arms or foreign influences, and adds (p. 16): "Left to themselves in a world of their own, without a past, and without a future before them, they had nothing but themselves to ponder on." What had become of their past, and how they could have known that there was no future before them, so as to be thereby influenced to ponder on themselves, to the exclusion of other and more profitable subjects of meditation, we are somewhat puzzled to see. Nor is it entirely clear to us in what sense they actually had no future before them. Perhaps the assertion is an anticipation of the one made more dis-

tinctly in a later passage (p. 31), that "India has no place in the political history of the world." But this, too, we do not wish to let pass without a protest. Statements of a like character are often met with in works that treat of races. Certain peoples are styled the historical ones; others are said to have no history, or to have played no part in the world's history. All this seems to savor in some degree of a selfish exclusiveness. If, as we devoutly believe, all men are brethren; if every human being, wherever found, of whatever color, and with whatever capacities, is a man, endowed with human rights and burdened with human responsibilities, then the history of the world is made up of the sum of all the separate histories of all its inhabitants. Why should we limit the term to that of which we know the details, or to that which, in the wonderful intermingling of human fates, has come to affect, more or less remotely, ourselves? It is true that we of European blood account ourselves — doubtless with right — the foremost race of all the family of man, having intrusted to our care the largest share of the interests, present and prospective, of humanity, liable to determine the conditions of the future history of the world more widely and imperatively than any people that has ever existed, called to a higher destiny, and made responsible for higher good to be accomplished, than any ancient nation; but all this does not justify us in assuming that the destinies of mankind centre in us, and that no rill of history deserves the name, if it be not a tributary to the mighty current of modern European culture. Within the limits of India dwell, even at the present day, a full seventh of the human race; nearly all of whom have derived their political, social, and religious institutions, their literature, arts, and sciences, from the Aryan immigrants; within those limits wars have been waged, and great deeds enacted; empires have risen, and flourished, and fallen; shall we refuse the name of political

history to changes in the political and social conditions of men carried on upon so grand a scale, because they have never overstepped certain fixed limits, because no conqueror has ever crossed the borders of the peninsula, to extend his dominion over the races lying outside? and that, too, when there has gone out from India an influence which — in a peaceful way, it is true — has affected the state of nearly all Eastern and Central Asia? No; India has acted a history, if she has not chosen to record its scenes in detail for our instruction, and the denial of this fact furnishes not so much as a hint toward the explanation of the remarkable peculiarities of the Indian variety of human nature. At present that explanation does not appear to be within our reach — if, indeed, we shall ever be able to grasp it, or to tell how in any case one nationality comes to acquire a type of character different from that of another. It is like the arising of varieties of a species: one of those natural processes which thus far elude our inspection and analysis in their ultimate causes and modes of production; which we can only notice, comment on, and describe.

The criticisms which we have been called upon to make upon some parts of Professor Müller's work may at least serve to show how hard it is, in the present condition of research into Indian antiquity, to frame general views respecting it which shall command universal assent. The truism, that it is far easier to pull to pieces than to build up, is nowhere truer than in matters affecting the archæology and history of India. The labors of a generation of scholars, or of more than one, will yet be needed before the vast body of material can be so looked over, and arranged, and made accessible, that the way shall be clear to a fair and stable construction of the fabric. How many centuries have not Hebrew and Arabic engaged the attentive study of numerous and able scholars! And yet, what new light has not been cast within a very few years upon

some of the most important subjects in either department of study! Sanskrit philology has no reason to be ashamed of what it has accomplished during its brief life of seventy years. So rapid a growth, and one so fruitful of help to so many other related branches of knowledge, has never before been known in the annals of literary investigation

THE TRANSLATION OF THE VEDA.[1]

AMONG the many important tasks which are occupying the attention of philologists at the present day, there is hardly another more urgent than that of translating the Veda, the sacred scripture of the Hindus. Remote as it may seem to us in many respects — its place of origin separated from us by half the circumference of the globe, its time by more than half the distance back to the currently accepted birth-year of man, its doctrines by an equal part of the course of human progress from savage atheism to a true morality and religion — this book, nevertheless, has attributes which bring it within the circle of our nearer interests. For it is a historical record belonging to our own division of the human race; and being such, its very remoteness gives it an added claim to our attention. It is far from us in the direction

[1] 1. *Ueber gelehrte Tradition im Alterthume, besonders in Indien*, etc. [*On Learned Tradition in Antiquity, especially in India.* Read on the 28th of September, 1865, before the Meeting of Orientalists at Heidelberg, by Professor R. Roth; and published in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society.* Leipzig, 1867. Vol. xxi. pp. 1–9.]

2. *On the Interpretation of the Veda.* By J. Muir, Esq. [From the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.* London, 1866. Vol. ii. pp. 303–402.]

3. *The Hymns of the Gaupâyanas and the Legend of King Asamâti.* By Professor Max Müller. [From the same, pp. 426–479.]

4. *On the Veda of the Hindus and the Veda of the "German School."* [Read on the 7th of January, 1867, before the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, by Professor Th. Goldstücker, and reported in abstract in the *London Examiner* for February 2, 1867.]

from which we ourselves have come; it tells of conditions through which our ancestors passed, and of which other knowledge is denied us. It is the oldest existing document composed by any Indo-European people, older than the Zoroastrian scriptures, many centuries older than the chants of Homer, and unapproached even by the traditions of the other branches of the family. This chronological antiquity would, no doubt, be of little account, if not supported by a corresponding antiquity of language and content. But it is thus supported. The idiom of the Veda is the least altered representative of that primeval tongue from which are descended the dialects of the leading races of Europe and Asia, all the way from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Bay of Bengal. And while the scene of action of the Veda is laid in India, the conditions and manners depicted in it are, nevertheless, of a character which seems almost more Indo-European than Indian. Nearly all that to our apprehension constitutes the peculiarity of Hindu institutions — the triad of great gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Çiva, the doctrine of transmigration, the system of castes, the mixture of subtle pantheistic philosophy and gross superstition — is wanting there. The nature-worship, the transparent mythology, the simple social relations of the Vedic period in India, cast hardly less light upon the beginnings of religion and society among the primitive nations of Europe than upon the Brahmanic constitution of the later days of Hindustan. At the same time, the Veda contains the actual germs, as yet undeveloped, of the whole Brahmanic system, which can be understood only as they and its relations to them are comprehended. Whether, then, we apply ourselves to the study of Indian or of Indo-European antiquity, this book is our equally indispensable guide and aid.

The term *Veda*, literally 'knowledge,' originally designates the whole immense mass of the earlier religious

literature, metrical and prosaic, of India, representing several distinct and diverse periods of belief and culture. Its divisions have been set forth, and their character and relations explained, in a previous paper;[1] it is only necessary, therefore, to repeat in brief summary the statements there made. It is composed of four bodies of works, entitled respectively the *Rig-Veda*, 'Veda of Hymns,' the *Sâma-Veda*, 'Veda of Chants,' the *Yajur-Veda*, 'Veda of Sacrificial Formulas,' and the *Brahma-Veda*, 'Veda of Incantations'—the last being more usually styled *Atharva-Veda*, from the half-mythic race of the Atharvans, with whom it is brought into some kind of artificial connection. Of each of these bodies a single work, containing matter chiefly poetic, forms the original nucleus, to which all the rest has become attached by gradual accretion. And the collection of hymns constituting the Rig-Veda proper, in this narrower sense, so far outranks the others in importance as to be, in our view, almost by itself *the* VEDA. It contains the earliest sacred poetry of the Hindus, produced at a time when they had as yet hardly begun to be Hindus; when, having but lately entered the peninsula at its northwestern frontier, they were pressing forward through the Penjab to take possession of the wider and richer valleys of central Hindustan, the principal scene of their later history. Its hymns are the prayers and praises with which that people addressed the gods in whom it believed; they reflect, then, in the first instance, and with most fullness, its religious creed and institutions; but along with these, more or less unconsciously and fragmentarily, its whole mode of thought and life. They were long handed down with scrupulous care in the families of the priesthood, regarded with reverence and profoundly studied by generations to whom their language and doctrines were becoming ever more strange; until at length, no one can tell when or

[1] See above, p. 5 *seq*.

where, they were committed to writing, and have reached our hands in a state of complete and accurate preservation which constitutes one of the marvels of literary history, and accompanied with a mass of auxiliary literature, critical and exegetical, which is hardly less marvelous.

The other three collections have, in a less degree, been regarded with the same reverence, and subjected to a like treatment. But while the Rig-Veda was evidently put together for the purpose of gathering and preserving the inherited treasure of ancient song, the next two, at least, have in view more special ends. The Sâma and Yajur Vedas are the liturgies or prayer-books of two classes of priests, composed of those passages, selected out of the mass of traditional matter, which were adapted to the needs of practical worship, as organized at a period far subsequent to that of the origin of the hymns: hence their contents are, in much the greater part, repetitions of those of the Rig-Veda. The Atharvan, finally, though not liturgical, but a free historical collection like the first, is of a much later date and spirit, illustrating the transition from the simple faith of the early time to the superstition on the one hand, and the sublimated and attenuated philosophizing on the other, which characterize the more modern religious development of India.

By the Veda, therefore, as the object of interpretative labor to the present generation of scholars, we mean the Rig-Veda hymns, along with such parts of the other collections as are akin to these in character. The difficulty of their interpretation lies in the obscurity both of their diction and their content. The Vedic dialect is notably unlike the classical Sanskrit, differing from it in the retention of a variety of grammatical forms which it has lost from use, and also, more especially, in the possession of a vocabulary to no small extent peculiar, containing not only scattered words, but whole bodies of roots and de-

rivatives, which find no place in the latter idiom. The difference of condition and sentiment, of the ways of thinking and acting, is even wider than that of speech, between the one period and the other. We have here, in short, one of that class of cases with which the student of ancient history is so often called upon to deal — a half-known antiquity, recorded in an imperfectly understood dialect; into the full comprehension of both he has to work his way as best he can, making the word explain the thing, and the thing the word, gaining by degrees deeper knowledge and clearer views, until the whole lies in its grand features and essential details distinct before his mind. Of course, until a thorough understanding of the Vedic antiquity shall be reached, no satisfactory translation of the Veda will be possible; the latter must be the sign and fruit of the former.

For penetrating to the sense of these ancient records we have abundant means, both direct and indirect, in the later language and antiquities of India. The whole accessory sacred literature is, to a certain extent, their comment. The numerous and voluminous *Brâhmanas* — regarded by the Hindus as continuations of the hymn-literature itself, and as being like this inspired — are filled with discussions of the divinities and ceremonies to which the hymns relate, with legends bearing upon their subject and occasion, with explanations of the allusions they contain, even with interpretations of their words and phrases. The *Sûtras*, or bodies of sacrificial rules, also cast light upon their meaning from the method of their ceremonial application. The *Prâtiçâkhyas*, and other treatises of a grammatical character, are not destitute of exegetical as well as critical value. A single work, of great, though unknown antiquity, the *Nirukta*, or 'Exposition,' of Yâska, takes for its express object the interpretation of difficult parts of the Vedic phraseology. All these are fragmentary or partial in their nature.

But about five hundred years ago, in a region of southern India where occurred the most important *renaissance* of Hindu learning and religion after their overwhelming overthrow by the Moslems, there was produced a series of giant commentaries, which follow the sacred texts line by line and word by word, setting clearly forth every item of their contents; and it is as accompanied by these commentaries, which, in the eyes of the modern Hindu, are their sufficient and authoritative exposition, that the texts have been placed in our hands.

It was a matter of course, then, that European scholars, when they began their studies upon the hymns, should take the commentaries as their guides; and by this aid, as no one pretends to deny, they won a much more rapid insight into the general contents of the texts before them than could have been attained in any other way. More recently, however, has arisen a lively discussion as to the absolute value of the commentaries, the age and source of the information they give, and the degree of authority which ought to be ascribed to them. There are those who maintain, in theory, that the traditional explanation given by the Indian exegetes goes back to the period of production of the hymns themselves, or at least to a time when the latter were fully and familiarly comprehended; that it possesses, therefore, a paramount value, and should be, in the main, strictly followed by us; and that, if we would fain understand the Veda, we have only to sit at the feet of Sâyana, Mahîdhara, and their compeers of the fourteenth century, and what we desire is attained. We possess a translation of the Rig-Veda made upon this theory; it is by Horace Hayman Wilson; the first half of it was published before his death, and Professor Cowell is now editing the rest from his manuscript.

Much the larger number of European scholars, however, have been of a different opinion. Their views are fully set forth in the first three of the papers which form

the subject of this article, and we will proceed to consider them as there presented.

After Colebrooke's remarkable essay on the Vedas (published in 1805) had failed to sow fertile seed in the minds of his contemporaries and followers, and Rosen's isolated enterprise of the publication of the Rig-Veda had been broken off almost in its inception by his untimely death (in 1837), it was Professor Roth of Tübingen who, more than any other person, initiated the present era of Vedic study, by his little work entitled "Contributions to the Literature and History of the Veda" (*Zur Litteratur und Geschichte des Weda*), of which the first portion was presented to the German Oriental Society in 1845, and which was published in the next year. His opinions upon the point now under discussion have always been clearly held and decidedly stated, and he is generally looked upon as the leading advocate of an independent interpretation. He has most fully expressed himself in its behalf in the Preface to the great Sanskrit Lexicon, of which he and Böhtlingk are the joint editors; and his exegetical principles have been best illustrated in his contributions to that Lexicon, in its explanation of Vedic words and discussion of Vedic passages. His present brief paper offers a summary view of the considerations which have suggested themselves to his mind, in the course of his long-continued occupation with the subject.

He first points out the difficulties which beset the understanding of all works coming down to us from former times, whether near or remote, and the necessity laid upon us of seeking intermediate aids, which shall lead us back step by step to a knowledge of the conditions under which those works were produced. Every ancient literature of any extent and importance, especially every sacred literature, offers such aid, in the form of glossaries, commentaries, and other kindred works. But in every known case, these aids, resting upon the basis of a learned tradi-

tion, have been found insufficient, and, to a certain extent, misleading — and this for reasons which are grounded in the nature of the case, and therefore unavoidable. Investigation, inquiry, the formation of an exegetical tradition, do not begin until the texts with which they deal have taken on a character of obscurity, are no longer directly intelligible. Not only, now, does the Hindu traditional literature constitute no exception to the general rule, but it is even a striking illustration of the rule. The circumstances under which it was produced would lead us to expect to find it thus. The great Vedic commentaries came into being after a time of general decay of Hindu learning, under the patronage of a king of barbarian extraction, and among a people of non-Sanskritic speech. For their construction had been gathered, we may admit, all of Brahmanic learning that was attainable; but the learned Pandits who resorted to the court of Vijayanagara could bring nothing with them which they did not already possess; and in order to show that they were the representatives of an authoritative tradition going back all the way to the Vedic times, it would be necessary to prove that such a tradition could and did exist at that time in India — the proof being derived either from the known history of Hindu literature and religion, or else from internal evidences contained in the commentaries themselves. The former mode of proof has never been seriously attempted; it has rather been assumed that, since the Hindus believe in the authority of the commentaries, we must do the same. This assumption involves a complete misapprehension as to where the burden of proof lies; the probabilities are on the side of the skeptics, and can only be overborne by direct evidence; and when we come to look for such evidence in the works in question, we find them, on the contrary, filled with the plainest indications of their true origin. A genuine tradition sets itself to give informa-

tion which could not be reached by other means; it explains things, relations, connected passages, rather than single words and petty details. The more primitive it is, the less will it wear a scientific aspect. The scientific exposition, on the other hand, begins with words, and from them tries to arrive at the comprehension of things more general. Of this latter character is the Hindu comment, through and through. It is grammatical and etymological, smacking of the school and the pedant in every part. Artificialities, inconsistencies, conceits, uncertainties, abound in it. It walks with no assured step; of difficult passages it gives without scruple a variety of different admissible explanations, leaving the reader to take his own choice among them. It exhibits, in short, no trace of genuine traditional insight.

Nor can the comment even claim to found itself upon a treasure of accumulated learning notably richer than is within our reach. It rarely cites a work which we have not in our own hands, or may not hope to have; and its references to those which we do possess — especially to Yâska's Nirukta, of which we have already spoken — are so very frequent and full as to show that, so far as ancient authorities are concerned, these were its main dependence.

When, now, we come to examine the oldest authorities themselves, we find them to be of the same character. Yâska, not less than Sâyana, endeavors to penetrate by etymological inquiry into the meaning of the passages he is treating; he cites the varying views of his predecessors, among whom there was a euhemeristic school, and also a nihilistic, denying that the Veda had any intelligible and attainable significance. From this and other like evidence it appears clearly that the tradition which is alleged to lie back of the commentators is only a tradition of the earlier attempt of investigators of their own class. There has been, it is true, a long succession of practised

exegetes; yet the succession began not in immediate and authoritative knowledge, but in erudite inquiry, resting upon the same basis which underlies our own — namely, knowledge of the Sanskrit language, and of the institutions and beliefs of the later periods in Indian history.

These are the leading thoughts of Professor Roth's concise but comprehensive essay. Though bearing primarily upon the Vedic controversy, they were intended also to have an application to the similar question now under debate as to the interpretation of the Avesta.

The next paper is by the eminent English scholar, Dr. Muir of Edinburgh, best known to the general reading public by his valuable series of volumes entitled "Original Sanskrit Texts on the Origin and History of the People of India, their Religion and Institutions," in which are gathered copious and authentic materials for the study of various points in Hindu antiquity, with full translations and explanatory remarks. The paper, though published before that of Professor Roth, comes after it in the order of composition and presentation to the learned body before which it was read. It takes up the same theme at much greater length, not limiting itself to a statement of principles and results, but establishing the one and deriving the other by means of a full array of evidence extracted from the works whose value is the subject of controversy. Dr. Muir's whole exposition is characterized by the most unexceptionable fairness and courtesy, by wide reading and industry of research, and by clearness of statement and logical method. It is a contribution to the discussion of very high value, and especially interesting to those who, themselves unversed in Vedic study, require to have things placed before their eyes in the light of an abundant illustration. Its force as an argument appears to us, we must acknowledge, overwhelming; we see not how those who maintain the paramount authority of the

commentators can meet its reasonings or set aside its conclusions.

Dr. Muir begins with quoting at some length the expressed views of both parties to the controversy — of Wilson and Goldstücker upon the one side, of Roth, Benfey, and Müller upon the other. He then proceeds to inquire what signs are discoverable in the Indian literature of a tradition respecting the meaning of the Veda handed down continuously from the earliest times. Such signs ought to be found, if anywhere, in the Brâhmanas, the class of writings standing next in antiquity to the hymns, and held sacred, like the latter themselves. But the best authorities agree that the spirit of the Brâhmanas is separated from that of the older hymns by a wider gulf than from the more modern religious literature — that the grand breach of continuity lies precisely here. These works, in fact, concern themselves only to a very limited extent with casting light upon their predecessors, and their success, when they attempt the task, is not such as to lead us greatly to regret their usual reticence; their misapprehensions and deliberate perversions of their text, their ready invention of tasteless and absurd legends to explain the allusions, real or fancied, which it contains, their often atrocious etymologies, are clear evidence that the spirit of the later time, which has always cared infinitely more about the letter than about the meaning of the Veda, was already dominant in the Hindu priesthood. Where, now, shall the primitive and unbroken tradition have begun, if it is unknown to the authors of the Brâhmanas? But even the task of collecting and sifting the exegetic material, such as it is, which these treatises contain, is yet to be done by us; the commentators do not found themselves upon it; it is only occasionally referred to by them.

Next, Dr. Muir takes up the Nirukta of Yâska, our earliest extant specimen of native exegesis, the beginning

of that series of works which at last found its culmination in the commentaries. He briefly describes its character and content, and extracts from it some of those curious discussions and accounts of schools of Vedic interpretation to which we have above alluded. From this point onward, the great bulk of his paper is taken up with the quotation and discussion of an extended series of Vedic passages, along with their interpretation as given in the Nirukta and in Sâyana's commentary; in the course of which are made abundantly to appear the loose, arbitrary, and often carelessly blundering method of these alleged representatives of an immemorial and authoritative tradition, their inconsistencies with themselves and with one another, their dependence upon grammatical and etymologic science for whatever light they cast upon the texts, and their frequent foisting upon these texts of the ideas and beliefs belonging to a later time. To follow him into the details of the discussion is not, of course, in our power here. His main conclusion is, that "there is no unusual or difficult word or obscure text in the hymns in regard to which the authority of the Indian scholiast should be received as final, [or his interpretation accepted,] unless it be supported by probability, by the context, or by parallel passages;" and that "it follows, as a necessary corollary, that no translation of the Rig-Veda which is based exclusively on Sâyana's commentary can possibly be satisfactory."

This being established, he at once proceeds to point out that the labors of the commentators have by no means been useless to us; that, on the contrary, they have "been of the utmost service in facilitating and accelerating the comprehension of the Veda;" that they have led us by a short cut to much knowledge which would else have cost long and painful investigation; and that they are worthy of being constantly consulted by the European who is grappling with the same difficulties

which they attempt to solve. In all this we fully agree with him; but we agree not less heartily when he goes on yet further to state that, after all, we derive from them little or nothing which we should not sooner or later have found out without their aid. How should the case be otherwise? Their basis of interpretation, as was shown from Professor Roth's paper, is not different from our own. We know the Sanskrit language, as they did; we have in our hands the materials for comprehending the Hindu institutions, even as these were comprehended by them. In both departments, indeed, we may readily acknowledge that they had in some respects the advantage of us; but in other respects we have not less clearly the advantage of them. We can hardly hope to make ourselves so familiarly and vernacularly acquainted with their classic idiom as were the Brahmans who were trained in it from boyhood, and had given the undivided labors of years to the task of mastering the intricacies of its grammar in their own text-books; nevertheless, for the purposes of a comparison of dialects, we command the Sanskrit far more thoroughly than they. All the methods and appliances of comparative grammar are at our disposal, and we can bring to the task an enlightened penetration, and a coolness and justness of judgment, to which neither the Hindus nor any other ancient people could make pretense. So, too, and yet more especially, the creeds and ceremonies of Brahmanic India were intimately known to them in a thousand particulars which are obscure to us; but this, again, is more than compensated by the prepossession with which their minds were filled in favor of those very institutions, and by their disposition to see in the antiquities of their country more of themselves and their belongings than really existed there. The historic faculty was too thoroughly wanting in the Hindu mind for Hindu scholars to be trustworthy students of the past. If they had owned the disposition and the power to re-

construct the fabric of ancient days, the Sanskrit literature would not be, as it is, without a vestige of a chronology, and with only a mass of paltry fables in place of history.

We are fully of opinion, therefore, that the help of the commentaries was dispensable to us. We shall not finally know appreciably more of the Veda than we should know if such works had never been compiled. It is even doubtful whether we should not already by this time have known without them as much as we in fact know; whether the facilities they offered us at the start are not more than counterbalanced by the concentration upon them of labor which might have been given to the texts themselves, and by the delay which they have wrought in the publication of the latter. Thus, when Müller's magnificent quarto edition of the Rig-Veda and its commentary, commenced under the auspices of the East India Company and continued under those of the British government, was first taken in hand, about 1847, a few months would have been amply sufficient for laying before the world the whole text. As it is, after twenty-five years, little more than two-thirds has yet been placed in our hands by Professor Müller. The students of the Veda long waited with despairing hope, while the work, with this heavy clog upon it, was wearily dragging its slow length through the press; until at last other scholars undertook to come to their relief, and give them access to the material they needed; and now it is Aufrecht who is the true editor of the Veda, while Müller has to content himself with the secondary honor of being the editor of Sâyana. He who has made much use of the commentary has had ample opportunity to observe that it accompanies and aids his investigations admirably, so long as he has perfectly plain sailing; but the moment a serious difficulty arises, he is left to his own resources; his helper is either more at a loss than himself, or offers him counsel which is impertinent and worthless.

The paper by Professor Müller, the third in our series, is a highly important contribution to the controversy we are reviewing, although it carefully avoids a controversial form, and is toned throughout as if the questions upon which it bears had never been made the theme of animated dispute. Its author has issued within the year a prospectus of a complete version of the Rig-Veda, which he has long had in hand, and has now gotten nearly ready for publication (it is understood that the first volume is on the point of leaving the press);[1] and here, *àpropos* of a simple acknowledgment which he wishes to give of the kindness of a friend in furnishing him new manuscript material for his other great work (the editing of Sâyana's commentary), it occurs to him to offer, in advance, a kind of sample of the way in which his translation is to be executed. He selects for the purpose a series of four hymns out of the tenth and last book of the Rig-Veda. These, by the Hindu tradition, are connected together, as having arisen out of a single historical occurrence, which the traditionists relate in full. Müller first reports the story in its several and not a little discordant versions — for the most part, also, giving the text of each version. A king has discarded his former officiating priests, Subandhu and his three brothers, and has taken two new ones in their place. The holy men thus supplanted have used incantations against the life of the king, to which the latter's new friends have retorted with still more powerful charms — with such effect, indeed, as to destroy the life of one of the offenders. Hereupon the beaten party compose and sing the four hymns in question, for the purpose of calling the spirit of their brother back to life; and they succeed in their endeavor. These are the essential features of the legend, as given by the commentators; and every one must perforce acknowledge that it wears an aspect

[1] See the next essay in this volume (p. 133 *seq.*)

of wonderful verisimilitude, as if reported by a faithful and immemorial tradition, perhaps from the very lips of the man so strangely witched out of the world and witched into it again! Müller then goes on to translate the hymns in strict conformity with their interpretation by Sâyana, as made to fit the story. But, having thus done all that could be required of a translator of the one school, he passes over to the other, and commences criticising his own work. He points out some of the more flagrant cases in which Sâyana's version militates against grammar and good sense, and distorts the plain purport of the text. He analyzes the legend, chases it up from one authority to another, and shows how it has become transformed from the simple shape it wore in the oldest record to that which we have given above — how it all grew up by successive accretions, with the help of blundering interpretations of words and phrases occurring in the text. The names of the king, his people, his two new priests, and their despatched and revived adversary, appear to him to be fabricated out of epithets which in fact have quite other meanings. Moreover, the whole story has as little adaptedness to the real content of the hymns as it has possible accordance with sober fact; it is neither *vero* nor *ben trovato*. Finally, we receive a new version of the whole series of verses, made in independence of the commentator; their disconnectedness is pointed out, and it is made to appear that the hymns are put together, in part, out of fragments having heterogeneous scope and intent.

In these three papers we have the case of the anti-comment party drawn out in all desirable fullness, and illustrated from every point of view: Professor Roth stating the general considerations which apply in all cases of the traditional interpretation of ancient texts; Dr. Muir illustrating those principles by the fullest and most detailed examination of the particular interpreters

whose authority is called in question; Professor Müller exemplifying, upon a connected portion of the Veda, the two modes of interpretation, and contrasting their results. Now let us see what is urged on the other side.

The first scholar who criticised unfavorably the rising school of Vedic interpretation in Europe, and attempted to cast discredit upon its results, was Professor H. H. Wilson, of Oxford and London. He had been educated as a Sanskritist in India, and had won a highly honorable name by his labors upon the later Sanskrit literature: a literature in which artificial conceits and labored obscurity unfortunately play no insignificant part, and commentaries are often absolutely essential to the progress of the student; where works are cast in a form intended for learned exposition, and an author sometimes adds to his own enigmatically terse text a written exposition which shall render its meaning accessible to others. Study of the Veda was not taken up in Europe until Wilson was already an old man, with his views and habits of mind fixed by long custom. His patronage and influence were very freely given to the new branch of research into Hindu antiquity, and were of essential aid to its progress: it would ill become any Vedic scholar to speak disparagingly of his services. But his merits are so great and universally acknowledged, in so many departments, that his friends can well afford to see his weaknesses plainly pointed out. He was never in real sympathy with the spirit of the scholars he had assisted; he distrusted their methods of independent inquiry, and rejected the conclusions they arrived at. It was too late for him to make himself a Vedic scholar in their sense, even if he had understood the requirements of Vedic scholarship as they did. The commentaries were the spectacles through which his disposition and training led him to look at those ancient texts, and he persistently credited and defended their sufficiency. To what an extreme he carried his

transfer of the conditions belonging to the later and artificial periods of Hindu literature to the early and spontaneous epoch of the hymns is shown most clearly by a highly curious passage (too long for quotation here) in the Preface to the second volume of his translation of [Sâyana's version of] the Rig-Veda. He there seriously lays it down as an acceptable doctrine, that only a tradition established by the authors of the hymns themselves, and handed down from their times to the present, could give us the intent of their epithets and elliptical phrases; that if a Vedic poet spoke, for example, of "the crooked," or "the broad and golden," he uttered a riddle to which he alone could furnish the clew: — as if such expressions must not have their ground and find their explanation in their own inherent significance and applicability, and in the habits of speech, the current associations, of the period! It were quite as sensible to maintain that, when an English poet speaks of "the deep," or "the briny," he must needs establish a tradition, lest after generations should have no means of knowing what noun had to be supplied; that Longfellow and Tennyson — or, to put it more strongly, Emerson and Browning — when they turn off a verse, whisper its esoteric meaning in the ears of a select number of disciples, by whose pious care it shall be set plainly before the apprehension of our descendants a thousand years hence. Even Wilson, however, as Dr. Muir has abundantly pointed out, was not so slavishly obsequious to the commentators in practice as in theory. The instances are by no means rare of his calling attention to the unsatisfactory character of Sâyana's explanations of particular words or phrases, to his inconsistency with himself or his discordance with other commentators, to his forcing upon his text ideas that are the acknowledged growth of a later time; and if he had been a younger man, there is no telling to what lengths of unbelief these heretical beginnings might have led him.

Since the death of Wilson, his mantle rests upon the shoulders of Dr. Theodor Goldstücker, Professor of Sanskrit in University College, London, author of the fourth paper whose title we have set at the head of this article. The paper was intended as a direct reply to the one by Dr. Muir which we have already considered. We have in our hands, it is true, at present, only an abstract of it; but, on the one hand, this abstract is very full and well digested, bearing every mark of having been drawn up by the author himself, and doubtless presenting with trustworthy correctness the main points of his argument; and, on the other hand, having waited in vain for more than a year for the appearance of the article in its completeness, and knowing by experience that its author is apt to find himself forced by circumstances to much longer delays in the publication of his works than he or others had anticipated, we do not feel that we need refrain from bringing it, in the shape it wears, as an authentic document, into the discussion.[1]

In considering, then, the argument of Professor Goldstücker, we have first to notice that, in more than one important respect, the title which he has prefixed to it is ill chosen. He styles it "On the Veda of the Hindus and the Veda of 'the German School.'" Herein is involved an evident *petitio principii*. The question is not between the Veda of the German school (or however else we may choose to call it) on the one hand, and the Veda of the Hindus on the other. The Veda of the Hindus, in the proper sense, is what both parties are alike trying to comprehend; and whether its comprehension shall be most surely arrived at through the methods of modern Hindu scholarship, or of modern European, is the point which we are endeavoring to

[1] In fact, the recent lamented death of Professor Goldstücker (March 1872) leaves us without any other fuller and more authoritative statement of his views upon the points here in question.

determine. It would be only a similar assumption of the other party to entitle its argument "The Veda of the Hindus *versus* the Veda of the Hindu Schools." Professor Goldstücker, if he would be fair, should have acknowledged as his theme, "The Veda of the Hindu Schools, and the Veda of the European School: which is the true Veda?"

Again, what we have here called the European school, as representing the established methods of modern European archæology and philology, Professor Goldstücker knows throughout as "the German school," always putting the words into quotation marks, and claiming that he borrows them from Dr. Muir. We have looked through the latter's paper, however, with considerable care, for the express purpose of discovering this title, and have failed to find that he employs it in a single instance. We would not venture to deny that it may lie hidden there, in some obscure corner that has escaped our search, or that Dr. Muir may have let it drop in the oral communication of his paper, while excluding it, as on the whole objectionable, from the paper as printed. But even this could constitute no justification of the way in which Professor Goldstücker makes use of it. He emphasizes it, dwells upon it, reiterates it three or four times in a paragraph, as if there lay in the words themselves some potent argument against the views he is opposing. Any uninformed person would say, we are confident, that he was making an unworthy appeal to English prejudice against foreign men and foreign ways; there can be no question that, whether by his intention or not, his language directly tends to excite, and array upon his own side, whatever of such prejudice may exist among his hearers and readers. We are not at all willing to credit that, being himself a German domiciled in England, he can have done anything consciously to "foul his own nest," as the saying is; but we might fairly have

expected him to take more pains to avoid whatever could possibly have an effect that way. Nor are we ready to believe that any one whose suffrage he would value is liable to be swerved from a correct judgment by national prepossession. That there should exist in the English mind a certain leaven of jealousy of the foreigners who have done so much more than the English to illustrate the language, history, and antiquities of their own Eastern empire, would be only natural; but it must be acknowledged, to their honor, that in general they have risen superior to it, and have shown a liberal readiness to receive both instruction and teachers from abroad: witness the long list, mainly of Germans (but including even one American, Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall), who have filled and are filling chairs of Indian study in English institutions of learning. During the past fifty years the whole world has been following the lead of Germany in all departments of philological science, glad and proud to do so. There is no more a "German school" in Vedic study than there is in comparative philology. In both alike, Germans made the effective beginning, and have done the greater part of the work; but, in both alike, the school has become European, and is fast becoming universal. Not to speak of Professor Goldstücker himself as the main, if not the sole, champion of the opposing party, an insurmountable obstacle in the way of any such restriction as he would fain imply in the name "German school" is to be found in the person of Dr. Muir, the most eminent of the Vedic scholars of English birth; and if he would look into other parts of the learned world, he might discover others of the same character.

But our author, while professing to borrow from Dr. Muir the invidious title which the latter does not use, and of which the relative position of the two is the most effective refutation, is at the same time at the pains to show that there is, in very fact, no "German school" at

all, in the sense in which his opponent understands the expression — or would have understood it, if he had employed it. In so doing, he misapprehends, as it appears to us, the whole scope of the controversy. The point at issue is not, whether Roth and Benfey and Muir and Müller have rendered any given Vedic passage in precise accordance with one another, nor even whether any one of them has rendered it correctly, but whether they shall be allowed to translate it if they can, or leave it untranslated if they must, without obsequious regard to what Sâyana may affirm to be its meaning. Shall we be content to translate Sâyana, or may we do our utmost upon the Veda itself, using Sâyana as a means to the comprehension of its significance, but only as one among many, and one whose value in any particular case is to be judged and determined by ourselves? This is the question with regard to which Professor Goldstücker stands upon one side, and his "German school" — that is to say, all the other Vedic scholars of note in the world — upon the other. He asserts that Roth and Benfey belong to different "schools" because their methods of interpretation (meaning, of course, in details) and their interpretations differ. But in this sense every individual scholar, ancient or modern, Hindu or European, constitutes an independent "school." Weber, he says again, must not be counted in the same school with the others, because, being addicted to contradicting himself, he has once expressed an opinion different from theirs as to the existence of a break in Hindu tradition. This seems to us little better than trifling. Lastly, Müller entirely disagrees with them all; he has lately "distinctly declared that, in his opinion, three fourths of the whole Rig-Veda had been correctly understood by Sâyana, whereas regarding the remaining fourth, he would often not be able to offer an interpretation of his own." But every other scholar whose name has been mentioned

would doubtless be able to say nearly the same thing, varying only as regards the exact proportion of the text which, in his view, Sâyana has shown himself capable of interpreting. To compare the Veda and Sâyana together, and note that the latter has comprehended the easier parts of it, while of the rest no small part is so difficult that we do not understand it much, if at all, better than he, is a marvelously different thing from taking him for our guide and authority. How Müller actually deals with the commentary has been sufficiently shown above; he speaks of it always with great gentleness, as befits the editor of Sâyana to do; but, when it comes to translating, not even Roth or Benfey could pursue a more independent course than he. In his regard for the repute of his Indian predecessors, he comes close upon the verge of misstating his own position toward them, and has, perhaps, fairly exposed it to the risk of being misunderstood by others who should pay more attention to his words than his deeds. Thus, in his paper now under discussion, he says (p. 452) that there is "no necessity for going beyond Sâyana's interpretation, whenever that interpretation satisfies both the rules of grammar and the requirements of common sense." Of course not: but this implies the setting up of grammar and common sense, according to our judgment of them, as authorities by which Sâyana is to be tried, in order that we may see whether his interpretation should be accepted — that is to say, the putting him into no better position than that to which he would be relegated even by the extremists of "the German school."

It is quite in vain then for Professor Goldstücker to claim Müller's support in his advocacy of the Hindu commentators. We do not see, in fact, that, since the death of Wilson, he can reckon any one but himself upon his own side: he constitutes, solitary and alone, the "anti-German school." Mr. Cowell, the lately elected

Professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge, has, it is true, dropped an expression or two which have seemed to some to betray an inclination to like views; but we are convinced that it would be doing great injustice to this scholar, considering the thoroughness, enterprise, and freedom of spirit testified by his various publications, to imagine that, when once fairly entered upon the task of Vedic interpretation, he would long remain in bondage to Indian guides. And certainly no other scholar to whose utterances the learned world is accustomed to pay attention can be rallied by our author under his banner.

But we may go farther, and assert that he is in great danger of being deserted by himself, his only partisan. Dr. Muir, whose acuteness and research almost nothing bearing upon the subject of controversy escapes, directs our attention to quite a number of instances in which the fragment of Goldstücker's Sanskrit Dictionary that has thus far appeared rejects Sâyana's interpretations, or pronounces them artificial and forced; exhibiting, as Dr. Muir phrases it, "a certain heretical tendency, ... which may, perhaps, as [the] Dictionary advances, become by and by developed into a more pronounced heterodoxy." If one's feet are once allowed to swerve from the narrow track of exegetical orthodoxy, it is difficult to see upon what firm ground they rest: they are liable to slide away even into the broad road of "German" rationalism.

The controversy, then, assumes a new form; it is virtually narrowed down to the question, whether Professor Goldstücker alone is to be regarded as qualified to decide when and how far the authority of the commentary is to be set aside, or whether others may also have their opinions respecting it. It does not need to be pointed out that, with the liberty of private judgment, there comes also a heavy burden of responsibility. Every scholar who puts himself forward as an interpreter must

be held to a strict account, and judged according to the learning, acuteness, and good sense displayed in his renderings. There are those, doubtless (it may not be unfair to refer, as an example, to M. Langlois, author of a complete version of the Rig-Veda in French), who come so poorly fitted to the work of translation that they do even worse than if they had followed the comment step by step. Ignorant presumption may show itself in the one direction, not less than comfortable indolence of spirit and bigoted submission to authority in the other; yet the only way to arrive at the truth in the end is to permit and encourage freedom of independent interpretation. Nothing is gained to Professor Goldstücker's cause by casting in the face of the other party the discordance of each one's version with that of his comrades: all that is fully foreseen and provided for in their system; there is not one among them who fails distinctly to point out that conjecture — or, as their antagonists would contemptuously style it, guess-work — must, for a long time to come, play a considerable part in our attempts at translation, as it demonstrably has done in those of the Hindus; that certainty will in some parts never be attained, and in others will come only as the result of successive approximations. The analogy of the Homeric and Biblical studies has been repeatedly appealed to by way of illustration; and Vedic scholars have been content to anticipate the solution of the last difficulty offered them by their theme at an interval after the last passage of the Greek poet or of the Hebrew narrators and prophets shall have ceased to be the subject of controversy, at least not more extended than that which separates the beginnings of Sanskrit philology from those of Greek and Hebrew exegesis. This may seem to some a not altogether encouraging prospect; yet few, we hope, will be inclined to escape from it by subjection to the infallible authority of a Hindu commentator.

Let us now look a little at the specific replies made by the champion of the commentators to the allegations of their opponents. He justly characterizes as "the most important argument of Mr. Muir against the value of the native commentaries" the exhibition of the alternative explanations — one, two, three, or even more — given by them in numberless instances for the same word or passage. What is this argument alleged to prove? Of course, that there was in existence in India no authoritative tradition, coming down from the period of the hymns themselves, and teaching with certainty their true meaning, which must have been one, and not many; but that the later Hindus were reduced to erudite methods of exegesis, to etymologic inference, and, when that failed them, to conjecture; and that they applied these methods with a degree of success depending, in different cases, on the difficulty of the problem in hand, and the learning and acuteness which they brought to its solution — often giving the right interpretation, but sometimes also the wrong, and very frequently unable to satisfy themselves which of two or more suggested versions was the true one. Professor Goldstücker would fain set aside this argument by pleading that the alternative explanations may represent the views of different schools of Vedic study in India; nay, leaping in the space of a single line from a possibility to an almost certainty, he asserts that they "must probably" be so accounted for. A most unfortunate reply; for it involves a full admission of the truth of the very argument against which it is brought. It is a matter of indifference to Dr. Muir and his side whether the discordant versions reported by Yâska and Sâyana be the products of their own unassisted ingenuity, or whether each had a separate paternity, and was backed by a whole school of commentators, or a dozen schools; in either case their presentation is equally conclusive against the existence of the

claimed authoritative tradition, and the trustworthiness of the reporting commentator as a guide for us to follow. He who is curious as to the history of Hindu learning may pay what heed he pleases to them; he who strives simply to know what the Veda means can only look at them with curiosity, as so many guesses, among which some one may possibly point the way to his own. After the admission here made, we see not what ground Professor Goldstücker any longer has to stand upon in his contest with "the German school."

Again, he states Roth's principles of interpretation to "consist in deriving the sense of Vedic words 'from a juxtaposition of all the passages cognate in diction or contents' in which such words might occur;" and he proceeds at once to point out "that the determining of cognateness of Vedic passages in diction, which, if it means anything, means their grammatical cognateness, was one of the most difficult problems of Vedic philology, a problem which, so far from having been solved, had as yet not even been propounded; and that it was begging, therefore, the question, if a writer founded an interpretation of words on that which, at present at least, was an unsolved difficulty." We must confess that, much as we have pondered this passage, setting it in every light and contemplating it from every point of view, it remains to us, as at first, totally unintelligible. We have no distinct idea of what our author is driving at. Any answer on our part, therefore, must necessarily be waived until the complete publication of his paper shall make clear his meaning, and enable us to see what is this awful question of the "determination of the grammatical cognateness of Vedic passages," which even he, deep as have been his studies in the Veda, has as yet ventured only reverently to recognize, but not to propound. Meanwhile, however, we cannot but think that the simple comparison of parallel passages (though a very different thing, no doubt,

from the other) may still be made a useful means of arriving at their respective intent. It has been applied, so far as we are aware, with a very tolerable degree of success, in nearly every language on earth except the Vedic — in languages new and old, well known and obscure; it is the principal method by which we elicit the meaning of a difficult expression in a German, a Greek, or a Sanskrit author, of a phrase in Egyptian hieroglyphics or in Assyrian cuneiform; and until Professor Goldstücker, or some one else, shall show good cause why it should be excluded from the treatment of the Vedic dialect of the Sanskrit, we suspect that great difficulty will be found in preventing incautious scholars from resorting to it, under the deluding influence of so much fancied authority.

But Professor Goldstücker goes on further to show, "that a method like that laid down by Professor Roth could be called scientific only on the assumption that all the Vedic hymns belonged to the same period of time, and to the same author," whereas it is admitted that they actually cover different periods, more or less distant from one another. "Classical philologers, he said, would laugh to scorn a method which, without so much as a settled grammatical basis"—that is, we presume, without having previously propounded and determined the question of the grammatical cognateness of its passages — "would pompously propose to derive the unknown sense of Greek or Latin words from a juxtaposition of passages belonging to different authors, and distant epochs of Greek or Latin literature." We heartily join with our author in deprecating the introduction of the contemplated proposal with any pompousness. He who should attempt to give himself airs on the score of bringing forward a suggestion so essentially obvious and commonplace would deserve at least to be broadly smiled at. If the risibles of classical philologers are so easily provoked, and on such subjects, we hardly know whether most to

regret that we do not form a member of so hilarious a body, or to rejoice that our ordinary proceedings are not liable to an accompaniment of jeers from our associates; for, although we never heard of their settling their grammatical basis in any such way as our author appears to contemplate, we feel confident that the classicists are all the time doing what he pronounces fit matter for scornful laughter. There is not a Grecian among them all who, instead of resorting to a modern Greek professor, or even an Alexandrian critic, to get upon authority the meaning of an obscure word in Homer, for instance, would not search through the whole Greek literature, and even, if his knowledge extended so far, through the vocabularies of other tongues akin to the Greek, for possible light to be cast upon it. Professor Goldstücker seems inclined to assume that no word which has any variety of meanings, or which has had a history of development of meaning, can have its meanings determined or its history drawn out by the comparison of parallel passages — that is to say, by studying it in the whole sphere of its use. If this were so, the applicability of the method would indeed be reduced well-nigh to nullity, for there are few words in any language that have a narrowly restricted and persistent individuality. But surely it is not so. The practised philologist, if he have material enough, knows how to mark out and set in order the whole territory of significance covered by the word he is studying; and it is only the practised and scientific philologist who can do this, though the word belong to his own vernacular speech. Our author's plea would be more effective, if, on the one hand, there had been any disposition on the part of European scholars to slight the element of variety and growth of signification in Vedic words, or, on the other hand, any disposition on the part of Hindu scholars clearly to recognize and duly to allow for it. The fact we believe to be just the other way. If any

Hindu exegete, grammarian, or lexicographer has succeeded in drawing out an acceptable scheme of the meanings of any Sanskrit word, according to their true internal connection, we, at least, have never been so fortunate as to fall in with it; nor do we discern in the discordance of Hindu interpretations of the Veda any traces of such schemes. We are warned, indeed, by Professor Goldstücker, that "words may have different meanings in different passages, and the merely individual impression derived by a scholar from the context of what might constitute to his mind a justification of such a variation is far too unsafe a criterion to be made the basis for narrowing the meaning of words." This sounds very well; yet, after all, the variation has its limits, and somebody must be allowed to decide in a given case whether an alleged world-wide discordance of meaning be fairly attributable to historical development or to the ignorance and arbitrariness of the interpreter. No scholar possessing any independence of mind can help criticising the authorities upon whom he is asked to rely; and when the student of the Veda finds the commentators explaining a word or phrase as meaning, in one and the same passage (to take a few instances almost at random from Dr. Muir's pages), either 'having the lightning for a weapon' or 'supporter of creatures,' either 'taken with the hand' or 'having rays,' either 'with full neck' or 'to be praised by many,' either 'having cattle' or 'perceiving what is minute,' either 'thy riches are most gladdening' or 'thy kinsmen are most destructive,' either 'persons who are sacrificing around' or 'birds which are flying around,' either 'swift' or 'a buck yoked in front,' and when he further finds a like diversity of meanings ascribed to the same word or phrase in different passages, we submit that he cannot long hesitate to which class of causes he is to ascribe both the one and the other.

At the end, Professor Goldstücker promises that the

sequel of his paper shall show, by a detailed discussion of the proceedings of "the German school," that the scholars who compose it cannot be "considered as having at all contributed to, or even facilitated, the solution of really difficult and doubtful points of Vedic exegesis." This is a very bold and comprehensive promise, and the learned world — or, at least, that part of it which is interested in the study of Indian antiquity — will be apt to look pretty sharply to see how it is fulfilled. Since we have shown that the "school" comprises all the known Vedic students except Goldstücker himself, and that even he is not wholly at variance with them as regards the one principle which unites them as a school, the question at issue (as already hinted) becomes virtually a personal one, wearing this form: "Is there a scholar in the world, save Professor Goldstücker, who is capable of judging when Sâyaṇa's interpretations are to be accepted as authoritative, and when they may be set aside and superseded?" We hardly think that he would shrink from putting it thus; at the beginning as well as the end of his paper, he appears rather to court than to shun a personal contest, reproaching Dr. Muir with failing to add to his intended proof of the untrustworthiness of Yâska and Sâyaṇa further proof that their opponents were any better than they; "for," he says, "even if their labors were worthless, it might at least be possible that those of 'the German school' were still more worthless." Nor would the assumption involved in such a formulation of the question as we have proposed be perceptibly greater than that exhibited by the same scholar a dozen years ago, when, being himself quite unknown as a Sanskritist to the world at large (he had not at that time, so far as we are aware, published any contributions to Sanskrit literature excepting prospectuses, including one of a rival dictionary),[1] he boldly condemned, as worse than worth-

[1] This is not quite accurate; a version (anonymous) of a Hindu drama, the

less, the great St. Petersburg Lexicon, edited by the veteran scholars Böhtlingk and Roth, and contributed to by many of the leading Sanskritists of Germany, and suggested that the part of it already published should be canceled, and the work begun anew. Since then, indeed, he has shown his powers in a variety of ways; and no one, we believe, will be now found to question his immense learning, his minute accuracy, and the sincerity and intensity of his convictions. These are qualities which, if combined with a due share of sound sense and critical judgment, cannot but give a high value to whatever he shall bring forth in the way of animadversion upon the results of Vedic scholars, and may yet establish his claim to be ranked among their number — for we cannot allow that mere denunciation of one's fellows and worship of Hindu predecessors make one a Vedic scholar. We trust that this will be the case, and that his criticisms will prove a solid contribution to Vedic exegesis. But we can already say, with a confidence amounting to certainty, that, if it be so, it will be because he adopts and carries out the method of those to whom he opposes himself in a better manner than they themselves have done; because he shows good and sufficient reason for regarding their interpretations as less acceptable than others which may be proposed — even, in certain cases, than those of the commentators themselves. And though he may thus rehabilitate some part of Sâyana's work, he cannot reinstate Sâyana in the place of paramount authority which has been claimed for him; to attempt it is to fight against the whole spirit of modern philology, of modern inquiry in every department; this has broken the yoke of too many an asserted authority to submit itself blindly to the lead of Hindu guides. The so-called "principles" of "the German school" consist solely in the application to

***Prabodha-Chandrodaya*, 'Rise of the Moon of Intellect,' made by him, had appeared in 1842, at Königsberg.**

Vedic studies of the well-established and tested methods of modern critical research; when they are abandoned, men will also be ready to go back to a belief in the fables of Livy respecting the early history of Rome, or in those of the Anglo-Saxon chroniclers respecting the settlement of England by Brut and his Trojans. Professor Goldstücker's attacks have not, so far as we can perceive, shaken them in a single particular. He may go on now to point out discordances between the interpretations of the different representatives of the school — discordances, perhaps, even approaching in degree to those of the versions which Sâyana sets side by side, comfortably leaving to his readers the responsibility of judging and choosing among them: but this will not help the argument; it will not even result in putting the modern and the ancient interpreters in one category together. Only he who (or his friends for him) shall thrust himself forward as an authoritative guide, and assert his own results to be infallible and final, can be looked upon as occupying a kindred position with that of Sâyana, and as needing, like him, to have his claims proved unfounded and set aside.

Nearly all our valuable knowledge of the Veda is due to the labors of "the German school." Even Colebrooke, vast as was his learning and acute his insight, beholding these ancient records through the eyes of the native scholars, was far from appreciating their significance, and closed his famous essay "On the Vedas" with a discouragement to their study; and they remained for more than a generation longer mere literary curiosities. The results drawn from them by German scholars have already won a universal value; they have passed into the possession of the world, as an essential part of its knowledge and conception of ancient times. If the study is to continue to flourish, and to complete its important work, it must be true to the same methods which it has thus far successfully pursued.

V.

MÜLLER'S RIG-VEDA TRANSLATION.[1]

EVERY one, nowadays, who knows anything about ancient literatures and ancient creeds, knows the exceptional interest belonging to the Hindu Veda, both as a literary and as a religious monument. Almost every one, too, knows the difficulty of entering this great mine of primeval thought and belief — from which, it is true, many treasures of golden ore have been brought to day, but which has never been thrown fully open to the explorer. With its exploration the name of Professor Müller has for long years been closely and conspicuously connected; and now that we have from his hand the beginning of a translation, and a fully annotated translation, or *traduction raisonnée*, as he styles it, of the Veda, it cannot be otherwise than important to see in what spirit he has undertaken the work, and with what success.

This is the more necessary, inasmuch as probably no one has opened the volume without experiencing, in one respect at least, a severe disappointment. Müller's translation had been announced by his publishers as to form eight volumes; in fact, it is still so advertised. This may have been the result of a misunderstanding, or else perhaps the estimated octamerism of the work was meant to be understood in some peculiar sense, not obvious to those

[1] *Rig-Veda-Sanhita. The Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans translated and explained by F. Max Müller.* Vol. I. *Hymns to the Maruts or the Storm-gods.* London, Trübner & Co. 8vo. Pp. clii. 263. 1869.

who were asked to subscribe for it; but when the first of the eight appeared, and was found to contain only twelve hymns out of the more than a thousand that make up the Rig-Veda — or, in verses, just about one seventy-fifth of the whole text — people could not help asking with what and how essential matter the other pages of the stout and costly volume were filled, for whose benefit such immense breadth of treatment had been intended, and whether it was, after all, for the common advantage, and a thing that the general public ought gladly to submit to, for the sake of the more special scholars to whom it might be as good as indispensable.

It does not, however, take a long examination to satisfy one that the volume is not economically constructed. Thus, in the first three hymns translated (with one of the later ones), precisely one quarter of the double page, as it lies open, is occupied with Müller's version. The whole lower half is filled with the versions of his three predecessors, Wilson, Benfey, and Langlois, given "for the sake of comparison." But who is to make the comparison? Not those who know nothing of the Vedic language, and cannot test each of the four by the original; they, of course, could make no intelligent choice, and would be likely to be captivated by the smoothest or most spirited rendering. Not, again, the Vedic scholar; he has the other three already on his shelves; he wants to know how Müller understands a given passage, and will find for himself the materials of whatever comparison he cares for. One of the two upper half-pages contains the transliterated text of the hymn itself; and this is equally a superfluous addition: the student of the Veda has it in another form, and does not want it here; the public at large can only stare at it with wondering eyes. This romanized Vedic text accompanies all the translations given, and seems intended to accompany all that shall follow; and it is not even added compactly at the foot of the page, but is spaced

out to fill the same room with the much more bulky English version opposite. It is a simple waste of room and of expense, and we trust that Professor Müller may be persuaded to leave it out in the remaining volumes of the series.

The supererogatory matter thus described does not, it is true, count for very much in a volume made up as this is. With all its dilution, the translation occupies less than an eighth part of the pages placed in our hands. More than four times as much space (or 214 pages against 49) is given to the notes, or commentary. This commentary, to the mind of its author, is so important a part of his work, that upon the strength of it he "ventures to call his own the *first* translation of the Rig-Veda." It is, we are told, intended to present "a full account of the reasons which justify the translator in assigning such a power to such a word, and such a meaning to such a sentence." "I mean by translation a real deciphering," adds our author, "a work like that which Burnouf performed in his first attempts at a translation of the Avesta." This comparison with Burnouf's work does not seem quite in point. It is well known that the great French scholar produced two or three bulky volumes upon the Avesta, in which he accomplished the translation and exposition of only a few paragraphs of its text. But, in the first place, he called them a "commentary" and "studies," not a "translation." And, in the second place, the circumstances of the two cases are as unlike as they can well be. The Zend language, when Burnouf took it up, was a *terra incognita*, and a most difficult and perplexing field of investigation. It partook of the nature of an inscription in an unknown language; it had to be deciphered. A mere version there, without full exposition of the methods by which it was obtained, would have been unintelligible and valueless. Burnouf's aim was to point out the way to others, to show them what they had to do if they would

read the Zend and interpret the hidden meaning of the Zoroastrian scripture. His work was therefore essentially inceptive and incapable of completion, and it always remained a fragment. As for the Veda, it occupies — with a marked difference, to be sure, of degree — a like position with the Iliad, or the Psalms: its method of interpretation is obvious, and the materials far from scanty; many scholars have been long engaged in its study, and have rendered parts or all of it, with more or less success, according to their opportunities and capacities; they have gone through, over their own tables, with processes of research and comparison in part identical, in part analogous, with those which Müller writes out at full length and breadth in his notes, claiming simply on the score of having done so the honor of being first translator — an honor which we imagine that the community of Vedic scholars will be very slow to award him, at the expense of such men as Benfey and Wilson and Roth and Muir and Aufrecht; or even of Langlois.

And they will be the slower to do so, inasmuch as he is far from redeeming his promise to account fully for every word and sentence of his translation. Such a promise, indeed, is in the nature of things incapable of being redeemed; one might write a volume about a single hymn, instead of a whole dozen, and still overlook important points, or treat them imperfectly. This being so, every translator making the pretensions that Müller makes must be held to account for the judgment with which he selects his points for detailed treatment, and the economy with which he expends his limited and precious space. If he tithes the mint and anise and cummin, and omits the weightier matters, we shall condemn his work as so far a failure. And that this is the case with Müller is, in our opinion, incontestable. Let us take the first verse of his translation as a specimen, and test a little its quality.

It reads: "Those who stand around him while he

moves on, harness the bright red steed; the lights in heaven shine forth." To this we have the note that "The poet begins with a somewhat abrupt description of a sunrise. Indra is taken as the god of the bright day, whose steed is the sun, and whose companions the Maruts, or the storm-gods." And then Professor Müller runs off into an interminable note about the word *arusha*, 'red,' translated in the verse 'red steed'—a note actually occupying eleven pages and a half, and involving the detailed citation and translation of some scores of Vedic passages, with a refutation of the views taken respecting sundry of them by the St. Petersburg Sanskrit lexicon. All this would be very much in place in a monograph, or as preliminary study to a dictionary-article on *arusha;* but so little has it to do with the exposition of this particular verse that it is great matter of question whether Müller, after all, translates the word correctly here. The next verse, namely, goes on to state that "they harness to the chariot on each side his (Indra's) two favorite bays." Why this, if his saddle-horse was already saddled and bridled? Or did the latter "move on" so fast while they only "stood around," that it escaped their hands, so that they had, as the next best thing, to turn to and tackle the double team into the wagon, that the impatient god might not lose his ride up the firmament? Surely, if the horses are harnessed in the second verse, and if the two verses belong together, it must be the "bright red *chariot*" that is harnessed (for the verb is one that is freely employed of either chariot or horses) in the first. Or can Professor Müller prove to us that the sun may be taken as Indra's steed, but not as his chariot? Something from the rest of the Veda to illustrate the relation of the sun and Indra, who is no solar deity, would have been far more welcome than the discussion about "red." Again, who are the bystanders here referred to? and how can they stand about, and yet harness something that is moving onward?

Is this such a satisfying conception that it should justify an extremely violent and improbable grammatical process like that of rendering *pári tasthúshas* as if the reading were *paritasthivâ'nsas?* The participial form *tasthúshas* has no right to be anything but an accusative plural, or a genitive or ablative singular; let us have the authority for making a nominative plural of it, and treating *pári* as its prefix — and better authority than the mere *dictum* of a Hindu grammarian to the effect that the two forms are interchangeable. To us the passage seems most probably one of those not infrequent ones in which forms of the two roots here found are set over against one another, as signifying the 'moving' and the 'fixed' or 'persistent:' 'moving forth from that which stands fast' — that is to say, the sun's orb swings itself up into the firmament from among the immovable hills out of which he seems to rise. Once more, by rendering the last third of the verse 'the lights in heaven shine forth,' the translator both misses the assonance found in the original, *rocante rocanâ*, and makes the expression tame by connecting the locative with the noun instead of the verb: render rather 'gleams glimmer in the sky,' or 'a sheen shines out in the sky,' or something like this.

We do not mean that this verse should be taken as a specimen of Müller's best work as a translator and commentator, or even of his average work. But it does bring to light, if in an exaggerated form, some of his characteristic faults. His notes are far from showing that sound and thoughtful judgment, that moderation and economy, which are among the most precious qualities of an exegete. On the contrary, they display a degree of heedless lavishness, in matter, style, and mode of printing, as if the author were in too much haste to be either select or concise, or as if his one main object had been to fill out the covers of a volume, with as little expense to himself as possible. Of course, he presents us with much that is

very valuable, and which all students of the Veda will accept with lively gratitude; but this he dilutes with tedious exhibitions of processes where results would have been sufficient, and with dwelling upon trifles while serious difficulties are slipped over unnoticed. He appears to be suffering under a confusion of the wants of the general reader with those of the special scholar; and, trying to please both, he satisfies neither. With one or two exceptions (notably Professor Roth of Tübingen, and perhaps also Professor Aufrecht of Edinburgh), Müller is, among all living scholars, the one who has studied the Veda most deeply, and whose version of its hymns would carry the greatest weight of authority. But the authority of any particular part of it would be best supported by the perceived success of the work as a whole, by its distinctness, its consistency, its intelligibility and readableness. While Müller's fellow-students would greatly have preferred more translation and less explication, it is, after all, the public at large whom he will have most disappointed;—the public, who were hoping for a work that should show them what the Veda really is, and should put it in an attractive light before them. Both classes alike will be slow to purchase the beginning of a series which seems likely to stretch itself out indefinitely, and after all to remain forever a fragment.

Burnouf, with all his extraordinary ability, was an unfortunate model to imitate. He was essentially a pioneer and pathmaker. His versatile and enterprising genius had no sooner forced its way into the heart of some difficult subject, working out the method of investigation to be pursued, than he abandoned it and turned to another. Thus his results were always inchoate and fragmentary. In the Veda he never did anything which was of advantage outside the circle of his personal pupils. In the classical Sanskrit, he began, in a style of costly luxury, the publication and translation of an immense work of

modern origin and trivial value (the Bhâgavata Purâna), and broke it off in the middle. In Zend he performed his most fruitful labor; but, presently laying it aside, he gave himself to the history of Buddhism. Here, too, his researches laid the foundation upon which all who come after him must build; but he himself soon ceased to build on it, and threw himself wholly into the Assyrian inscriptions. In this last department, where his aid would have been of incalculable value, he had not yet begun to produce for the world, when his untimely and lamented death cut short his useful activity. Burnouf was a giant in whose footsteps ordinary men should not try to walk; but Müller, unless he changes materially the scale of his Veda-translation, is likely to resemble him at least in leaving behind him an unfinished work; even should he realize the current prayer of the Vedic poets. and "live a hundred autumns."

It is doubtless in order to give, at any rate, a secondary kind of completeness to his work, that Müller takes up first the hymns to a certain order of deities; and his plan is in this respect decidedly to be approved. He promises to finish in the next volume the hymns to the Maruts. Why he selected this particular class he does not inform us; perhaps it is because they are not numerous, and have not been much worked upon by previous translators. Of course, he has the right to choose what he will to begin with; only we, on our part, cannot help criticising his choice, and wishing that it had been made differently. If it was any part of his aim to give a foretaste of the contents of the Veda which should be an engaging one, and to tempt those who dipped into it to pursue the study further, he could not well have made a more unfortunate selection. The Maruts, or storm-gods, are an uninteresting set of beings. They hover on the confines between the natural and the supernatural, between the merely phenomenal and the deified and divine. They

have a vague and indistinct individuality, and are infertile of mythology and lively and fanciful description. And as they are, so are also their hymns. He who reads through the versions given in this volume, and asks for more of the same, must be sustained by a more than usual interest which he has brought to the work from without. If our author, on the contrary, had prefaced his series of versions with the hymns to the Dawn — which, considering his known predilection for that element in Indo-European mythology, we might almost have expected him to do — or with a selection of hymns of various subject, containing rich mythologic material, with perhaps a tinge of human interest also, he would have made a far more favorable impression, effectively fostering a study whose advance he certainly has greatly at heart.

To the nature of the themes treated we have unquestionably to attribute in great part the tediousness of Müller's versions. But not wholly to this. It appears in his other works as well as here, that that remarkable facility and beauty of style which distinguishes in general his English compositions fails him in translation. Perhaps this is the severest of all tests of a foreigner, the power to translate into nervous and lively phrase in a language not his own: certainly, all our author's renderings, so far as we know them, are a little tame and spiritless. But we think it is also true that he has taken the work of translation somewhat too easily, put too little of his force into it, and been content to render words and phrases, instead of determining to gain a vivid apprehension of a hymn as a whole and to reproduce it as it impressed him. We sorely miss, too, the poetic form. We were disposed, indeed, when reading his introduction, to assent to his claim that "it was out of the question in a translation of this character to attempt an imitation of the original rhythm or metre. . . . . At present a metrical

translation would only be an excuse for an inaccurate translation;" but we have come to question whether he was right. It certainly is not impossible to make a metric version which shall reproduce with sufficient fidelity one's idea of an original; it may require considerable labor; but if we are to have only a dozen hymns in a volume, we have a right to expect that dozen to be elaborated to the very highest degree. Especially have we been made doubtful of Müller's canon by seeing what Roth has accomplished. In the last volume, namely, of the "Journal of the German Oriental Society" (vol. xxiv., 1870, p. 301 *seq.*), that great scholar has given a rendering, in the metre of the original, of two Vedic hymns, with brief accompanying comments, by way of setting forth what would be his idea of a desirable translation of the Veda. One of the two is of the dozen contained in Müller's volume; and, in order to set the two methods side by side, we have ventured to turn Roth's version (with some slight modifications) into metrical English; without at all claiming to give again faithfully the terseness and vigor of his German verse.

Müller translates as follows: —

The Prologue.

The sacrificer speaks:

1. With what splendor are the Maruts all equally endowed, they who are of the same age, and dwell in the same house! With what thoughts! From whence are they come? Do these heroes sing forth their (own) strength because they wish for wealth?

2. Whose prayers have the youths accepted? Who has turned the Maruts to his own sacrifice? By what strong devotion may we delight them, they who float through the air like hawks?

The Dialogue.

The Maruts speak:

3. From whence, O Indra, dost thou come alone, thou who art mighty? O lord of men, what has thus happened to thee? Thou greetest (us) when thou comest together with (us), the bright (Maruts). Tell us then, thou with thy bay horses, what thou hast against us!

Indra speaks:

4. The sacred songs are mine, (mine are) the prayers; sweet are the libations! My strength rises, my thunderbolt is hurled forth. They call for me, the prayers yearn for me. Here are my horses, they carry me towards them.

The Maruts speak:

5. Therefore, in company with our strong friends, having adorned our bodies, we now harness our fallow deer with all our might; — for, Indra, according to thy custom, thou hast been with us.

Indra speaks:

6. Where, O Maruts, was that custom of yours, that you should join me who am alone in the killing of Ahi? I indeed am terrible, strong, powerful, — I escaped from the blows of every enemy.

The Maruts speak:

7. Thou hast achieved much with us as companions. With the same valor, O hero, let us achieve then many things, O thou most powerful, O Indra! whatever we, O Maruts, wish with our heart.

Indra speaks:

8. I slew Vritra, O Maruts, with (Indra's) might, having grown strong through my own vigor; I, who hold the thunderbolt in my arms, I have made these all-brilliant waters to flow freely for man.

The Maruts speak:

9. Nothing, O powerful lord, is strong before thee; no one is known among the gods like unto thee. No one who is now born will come near, no one who has been born. Do what has to be done, thou who art grown so strong.

Indra speaks:

10. Almighty power be mine alone, whatever I may do, daring in my heart; for I indeed, O Maruts, am known as terrible: of all that I threw down, I, Indra, am the lord.

11. O Maruts, now your praise has pleased me, the glorious hymn which you have made for me, ye men! — for me, for Indra, for the powerful hero, as friend for a friend, for your own sake and by your own efforts.

12. Truly, there they are, shining towards me, assuming blameless glory, assuming vigor. O Maruts, wherever I have looked for you, you have appeared to me in bright splendor: appear to me also now!

The Epilogue.

The sacrificer speaks:

13. Who has magnified you here, O Maruts? Come hither, O friends, towards your friends. Ye brilliant Maruts, cherish these prayers, and be mindful of these my rites.

14. The wisdom of Mânya has brought us to this, that he should help as the poet helps the performer of a sacrifice: bring (them) hither quickly! Maruts, on to the sage! these prayers the singer has recited for you.

15. This your praise, O Maruts, this your song comes from Mândârya, the son of Mâna, the poet. Come hither with rain! May we find for ourselves offspring, food, and a camp with running water.

Roth adds to his version the following account of the story, so to call it, of the hymn: —

"The singer inquires (vv. 1, 2) whither the Maruts, the winds, whose whistling he hears, are hasting, and who is going to succeed in detaining them at his sacrifice. Then, in the form of a dialogue between the Maruts and Indra (3–12), the praises of the former are intended to be set forth; and this object is not unaptly accomplished, since, although the highest glory is given to Indra, their praise is finally put in the god's own mouth. Indra, so the dialogue runs on, usually united with the Maruts in lively course, goes this time alone, and is asked by them why he does not take them with him. He makes the evasive answer that he is on the way to a sacrificial feast; whereupon they are ready and eager to accompany him (5). Indra retorts derisively that they, who are all on hand for junketing, were not quite so forward when the matter impending was the dangerous fight with the dragon, whom he alone had slain (6). The Maruts have nothing to plead against this, but merely call to mind, with self-satisfaction, that they and Indra have done great things together, and that they mean to prove themselves his faithful allies in the future also. Indra has no mind to share his glory with them, and boasts (8) again of his exploits: and the Maruts are fain (9) to acknowledge his might without reserve, and extol him as the chief of the gods. This pacifies the god; he vaunts himself once more (10), but also thanks the Maruts for their frank and hearty homage, and declares that the sight of them delights his heart (12). Thus their reconciliation is sealed. In the closing verses (13–15) the poet turns to the Maruts themselves, and, naming himself, seeks to attract their attention to the feast prepared for them and to his skillful song of praise, and to win them to be present with their gifts."

And the hymn itself reads thus: —

THE POET:

1. Upon what course are entered now together,
of common age, of common home, the Maruts?
With what desire, and whence, have they come hither?
the heroes make their whistling heard for longing.

2. Whose prayers and praises are the youths enjoying?
Say, who hath turned the Maruts to his off'ring?
As they go roving through the air like falcons,
how shall we stay them with our strong devotion?

THE MARUTS:

3. How comes it, Indra, that thou goest lonely,
though else so blithe? tell us what ails thee, master.
Thou'rt wont to talk with us as we go onward;
lord of the coursers, what hast thou against us?

INDRA:

4. I love the prayers, the wishes, the libations;
the odors rise; the *soma*-press is ready;
They draw and win me with their invocation;
my coursers here carry me forward to them.

THE MARUTS:

5. So then will we, along with our companions,
the free and mighty, putting on our armor,
Harness at once our spotted deer with pleasure:
thou com'st exactly to our wish, O Indra!

INDRA:

6. And where was then that wish of yours, ye Maruts,
when me ye sent alone to slay the demon?
But I, the fierce, the powerful, the fearless,
have struck down every foeman with my weapons.

THE MARUTS:

7. Thou didst great things when we were thy companions,
by our united manliness, O hero!
For many feats can we achieve, O mightiest,
Indra, with power, whene'er we will, ye Maruts!

INDRA:

8. I Vritra slew, ye Maruts, by my prowess,
and my own fury 'twas that made me fearless.
'Twas I, with lightning armed, who made these waters,
all sparkling, flow in easy streams for Manu.

THE MARUTS:

9. Before thee, mighty one, is nought unshaken;
among the gods is no one found thine equal;
None born, and none that 's to be born, can reach thee;
do, thou exalted one, whate'er it likes thee!

INDRA:

10. Let my power only be without a limit;
wisely I finish all that I adventure;

For I am known as terrible, ye Maruts!
whate'er I touch, Indra is soon its master.

11. Your praise, O Maruts, now hath given me pleasure,
the worthy hymn that ye for me have uttered,
For me, for Indra, for the jocund hero,
as friends should for a friend, with feeling hearty.

12. Truly they please me as they stand before me;
in glory and in vigor they are matchless.
Oft as I've seen you, Maruts, in your splendor,
ye have delighted, as ye now delight me.

THE POET:

13. Who hath exalted you like us, ye Maruts?
as friends go forth to friends, so come ye hither.
Ye bright ones, fan to ardor our devotions;
of these my pious labors be ye heedful.

14. Here, where the singer aids the sacrificer,
and Mânya's art has gathered us together,
Ye Maruts, to the holy sage come hither!
these songs of praise the bard to you is utt'ring.

15. This is your praise, and this your song, O Maruts!
made by Mandâra's son, the singer Mânya.
Come hither with refreshment for our strengthning!
may we win food, and meadows rich in water!

If our transfer into English does not altogether fail to do justice to Roth's conception and interpretation of the original text, no one, we are sure, can fail to see how greatly inferior is Müller's translation. In Roth's hands, the hymn gains for the first time a unity of design and reality of interest, becomes an actual hymn, a creation of poetic art, such as we see might have kindled the minds and aided the devotions of a primitive people. This liveliness of apprehension, this determination to call nothing "translated" which is not made thorough good sense of, which is not understood in its whole connection and brought into a completely presentable shape, is characteristic of Professor Roth's mode of working, as illustrated by him with reference to the Avesta as well as to

the Veda.[1] His version may be assailable in points of detail, there may be words and phrases of which Müller's understanding is more accurate, as there unquestionably are others as to which both alike will hereafter be set right; but his ideal and his realization of it are markedly in advance of those of his rival.

It should not fail to be pointed out that Müller, in his Preface (pp. xii., xiii.), speaks with the utmost candor and modesty of his own translation, as being, what every translation at the present time must be, "a mere contribution towards a better understanding of the Vedic hymns," which on many points "is liable to correction, and will sooner or later be replaced by a more satisfactory one;" and that he estimates fairly and acknowledges handsomely the labors of his fellow-scholars. How much of doubt and uncertainty still hangs over the whole subject may be clearly seen from the discordance, as exhibited above, between versions of the same passage by the two leading Vedic scholars — which discordance appears still more striking when we compare the versions of the other three translators quoted by Müller. Its limits are gradually narrowing, as the Vedic grammar and vocabulary are becoming more thoroughly understood, and, yet more, as the Vedic antiquity, its circumstances, forms of thought, and creeds, are better comprehended; we heartily wish that Müller might see — what appears plain to many others — that he would hasten on the time of accordance most effectively by giving us as rapidly as possible the results of his efforts at translating, leaving us to infer or conjecture the methods of their attainment.

There is yet another element in the volume, to which we have as yet made only casual reference — namely, the preface or introduction, of more than one hundred

[1] See his *Contributions to the Interpretation of the Avesta*, in the current volume (xxv., 1871) of the *Journal of the German Oriental Society*.

and fifty pages. It may be summarily characterized as greatly wanting in pertinence. About twenty-five pages constitute a real introduction to the translation; the rest has nothing to do with translation at all; it discusses the question whether certain hymns of the Rig-Veda, which pretty evidently did not belong to the text as at first made up, are or are not best treated as a supplement only; it examines the relations to one another of different scholastic forms of the text; it points out certain misreadings and errors of the press in the author's published edition of the Veda, and others which have crept into Aufrecht's transliterated edition, and so on; and it ends with a protracted and in part polemical discussion of certain peculiarities of Vedic metre, having no bearing on interpretation. All has its interest and importance, to be sure; but it does not belong here. If its author had no other opportunity of expressing his views on Vedic subjects before the world, no one would grudge his taking advantage of this one; but the pages of a score of learned journals are eagerly open to him, and even the prefaces of his Rig-Veda volumes are a far fitter receptacle of such matter than the one which he has chosen.

On the whole, we hardly know a volume of which the make-up is more unfortunate and ill-judged, more calculated to baffle the reasonable hopes of him who resorts to it, than the first volume of Müller's so-called "translation" of the Rig-Veda: if the obligation of its title be at all insisted on, at least three quarters of its contents are to be condemned as "padding."

VI.

THE AVESTA.

UNTIL within a little more than a hundred years, the classic authors had been almost our only authorities for the ancient history and manners and customs of Persia. Their insufficiency was painfully felt. Long and intimate as had been the intercourse of the Greeks with the Oriental Empire, the information which they had left on record respecting its institutions but half satisfied an enlightened curiosity. They gave us only a picture of that power which had suddenly risen in the west of Iran, upon the ruins of yet more ancient empires, adopting in part their culture, and along with this their corruptions and vices also; so that it had sunk again into ruins, after a brief though splendid existence of about three centuries. Later, they told us somewhat of the external fates of the various realms into which Alexander's eastern conquests were divided; and yet later, the Roman and Byzantine annals spoke of conflicts with Parthian and Sassanian monarchs, not always resulting to the honor of the European power. And, for more modern times, Mohammedan writers related the story of the conquest of Iran, and the extinction of its ancient customs and religion. These were all of them the accounts of foreigners. There was also in existence a modern Persian literature, of abundant extent and rich in beauties, which professed to give a view of the nation's fates from the earliest times; but the account

which it furnished was epic and traditional, unaccordant with what we knew from other sources, incapable of reduction to the form of true history; and, since it was produced under Mohammedan influences, it could not possibly reflect a faithful picture of native Persian institutions and character. But, a century ago, an entirely new avenue of access to the knowledge of Iranian antiquity was opened. The western world was then for the first time made acquainted with the Avesta, the ancient and authoritative record of the Iranian religion, the Bible of the Persian people. Here was a source lying beyond and behind anything hitherto accessible. It was of a remote antiquity, claimed to be the work of Zoroaster himself, the well-known founder of the Persian religious belief, the prophet and the legislator of Iran, the establisher of the earliest institutions respecting which our other informants had given us any account; it was a part of a native literature, in which we might expect to read the national character with much more distinctness and truth than in the descriptions of foreigners; and it antedated, and was independent of, any external influences upon Persian civilization. Its introduction to our knowledge changed the whole ground of investigation into Persian antiquity. In it was to be found the key to the true comprehension of the subject; by it other sources of information were to be tested, their credibility established or overthrown, their deficiencies supplied. Not a little of this work has been now already accomplished, but much more yet remains to be done. The investigation is still in its early stages; its materials have been until recently only partially accessible, and the number of laborers upon them small; its importance has been but imperfectly appreciated; nor until very lately have the means and methods of archæological research been so far perfected that the new material could be intelligently taken up and mastered. It is not possible, therefore, to give as

yet a full statement of the results derivable from the Avesta for the knowledge of Persian antiquity. It will be the object of this paper only to sketch the history of the bringing to light of the writings in question, and to set forth the study and labor which has since been expended upon them; and further, to give such a view of the general results won and to be won from them as shall serve to illustrate their importance.

The Pârsî communities dwelling on the western coast of India have been the medium through which the ancient Persian scriptures have come into our possession. Before we proceed, therefore, to a consideration of the latter, it will be well to go a little farther back, and inquire how the seat of the Zoroastrian religion and culture came to be removed from Persia to a land of strangers. It is an interesting and curious history.

The Parthian dynasty had for some centuries held sway in Persia, when, A. D. 229, it was overthrown and replaced by the Sassanian. This was a native Persian family; its monarchs made themselves the protectors and patrons of whatever was peculiarly Persian, revived the ancient customs and religion, and raised the realm to a pitch of power and glory hardly exceeded even in its palmiest days; but they went down, A. D. 636, before the fanatical valor of the Mohammedan Arabs, then just entering upon their career of almost universal conquest. Now began the work of extinguishing by violence the native religion and institutions. It was not accomplished at once; for a long time, indications of a vigorous, though ineffectual resistance on the part of the Persians to the political and religious servitude into which their nationality was being forced, are to be discovered in the Mohammedan histories: but it was by degrees repressed and broken; and at last. probably some time during the ninth century, a communi ty of those who would still hold fast to the ancient faith took refuge from persecution among the mountains of

Kohistan, on the western border of the present Beluchistan. Thence, after a residence of near a hundred years, they were either hunted or frighted, and betook themselves to the island Ormus, in the strait of the same name, between the Persian Gulf and that of Oman. But they remained here only fifteen years, and then, sailing southeastward along the coast, settled upon the island of Diu, off the peninsula of Guzerat. Once more, after an interval of rest of nineteen years, they embarked with their effects, and, crossing the Gulf of Cambay, finally established themselves on the main-land, in the neighborhood of Surat, and their wanderings were at length at an end. Such is the account which their own traditions furnish us;[1] but it has been conjectured[2] that commercial connections led the way from Persia to India, and at least established there the nucleus of a Pârsî community, to which those afterwards resorted who left their country for the sake of the undisturbed exercise of their religion. In their new home they lived at first in quiet and prosperity, by the sufferance and under the protection of the mild and tolerant Hindus. But in the eleventh century their old foes, the Mohammedans, found them out once more; they shared the fate of their Indian protectors, after aiding in the vain resistance these offered to the invaders: they were oppressed and scattered, but not this time driven away; and their descendants still inhabit the same region. They have adopted the language of those among whom they are settled, but have adhered steadfastly to their own religion and customs. They have retained, too, among the dark and listless Hindus and Mohammedans, the light complexion and the active habit of mind and body which belonged to them in their more northern home. They are the "Armenians" of

[1] See Eastwick on the *Kissah-i-Sanjân*, in the *Journal of the Bombay Society*, vol. i. p. 167 *seq.*

[2] See Westergaard's *Zendavesta*, preface, p. 22.

India, the most enterprising and thriving portion of its Asiatic population, and have so prospered, especially since the establishment of English supremacy brought freedom and security for the arts of peace, that they are now a wealthy and influential community. They had brought with them originally their sacred books; they lost a part of them during the disturbances which attended the Mohammedan conquest, but were supplied anew from the brethren whom they had left behind in Kerman. With these they long kept up a correspondence, acknowledging them as their own superiors in the knowledge of the common faith, obtaining their advice from time to time on doubtful points of doctrine or practice, and receiving from them books or teachers. These Persian communities of Gebers, however, it should be added, who were thus only a century ago regarded as the highest authority in matters affecting the Zoroastrian religion, have since rapidly wasted away under the continuance of the same oppressions which had earlier driven their fellow believers to emigrate. They were visited in 1843, at Kerman and Yezd, their two chief seats, by Westergaard,[1] for the express purpose of examining into their condition, and of endeavoring to obtain from them copies of any valuable manuscripts which might be in their possession. He found them in the lowest state of decay, especially at Kerman, and fast becoming extinct by conversion to Mohammedanism. They had almost lost the knowledge of their religion; they had but few manuscripts, and among these nothing that was not already known; they had forgotten the ancient tongues in which their scriptures were written, and were able to make use only of such parts of them as were translated into modern Persian; they could not, however, be induced to part with anything of value. In another century, then, the religion of Zoroaster will probably have become quite extinct in its native country,

[1] See his letter to Wilson, in *Jour. Roy. As. Society*, viii. 349.

and will exist only in its Indian colony; but it has lived long enough to transmit as an everlasting possession to the after world all that has for centuries been in existence of the old and authentic records of its doctrines; and, having done that, its task may be regarded as fulfilled, and its extinction as a matter of little moment.

We are now prepared to return, and inquire into the introduction of the writings in question to the knowledge of Europe.

The movement commenced with the beginning of the eighteenth century, and the first step of it may be said to have been the publication, in 1700, of Hyde's "Veterum Persarum et Magorum Religionis Historia," which first taught the learned to seek for contributions from Oriental sources to the knowledge of the subject furnished by the classical historians. Hyde knew that votaries of the Persian religion still existed both in Persia and in India, and that they were in possession of what they asserted to be their ancient and original scriptures; he even had in his hands portions of the latter; but he was unable to make any use of them, from ignorance of the language in which they were written. India was at that period rapidly becoming opened to European, and especially to English enterprise, and Pârsî manuscripts continued to be brought, from time to time, from the settlements about Surat, so that by 1740 more than one copy of all, or nearly all, their religious writings had been deposited in the Oxford libraries; but they were still as books sealed with seven seals to the knowledge of Europeans.

It was a Frenchman, the celebrated Anquetil-Duperron, whose zeal and devotion first opened this literature to western eyes. He was in Paris, in 1754, a very young man, pursuing Oriental studies with ardor at the Royal Library, when a few lines traced from one of the Oxford manuscripts chanced to fall under his eye, and he at once

formed the resolution — a somewhat wild and chimerical one, as it seemed — to go to Persia or India, and bring back to his native country these ancient works, and the knowledge necessary to their interpretation. There was perseverance and energy, as well as enthusiasm and ardor, in his character, and he showed the former qualities as remarkably in the execution of his project as the latter in its conception. All the influences at his command he set in motion, to procure him the means of transit to the East, and of support while engaged in his studies there. As, however, success seemed to his impatient spirit neither near nor sure enough, he determined to enlist as a private soldier in the Indian Company's service, certain thus of being conveyed across the ocean, and trusting to the future for the rest. And he actually marched out of Paris on foot with his company, in November, "to the lugubrious sound," as he says, "of an ill-mounted drum." But upon his arrival, ten days later, at L'Orient, he found that his resolution and devotion had in the mean time met with due appreciation: he received his discharge from military service, a pension of five hundred francs, free passage in one of the Company's vessels, and promise of aid and support in the carrying out of his purposes. He landed at Pondicherry August 10th, 1755. Many obstacles intervened to delay his success, arising partly from the unsettled, or actually hostile relations between the French and the English, whose career of conquest was just then commencing, but in considerable measure likewise from his own lack of prudence and steadiness of purpose; so that almost three years had passed away before he fairly commenced his labors. The interval was not entirely lost; he acquired knowledge enough of Persian and other Eastern languages to be of essential service to him in the further pursuit of his studies, and journeyed extensively about the Indian peninsula, from Pondicherry up the coast to Bengal, and thence all the way around to

Surat, by land; the history of these travels, as well as of his whole residence in India, is given in the first volume of his Zend-Avesta. He finally reached Surat, the scene of his proper labors, and his home for three years, on the first of May, 1758. Already while he was in Bengal, it had been signified to him by the Chef of the French station in Surat, to whom he had made known his wishes, that certain Pârsî priests there were ready to constitute themselves his instructors, and to communicate to him their sacred books, and the knowledge of the languages in which these were written. Dissensions among the Pârsîs themselves had aided in bringing about this willingness to initiate a foreigner into the mysteries of their religion, which they had hitherto kept secret against more than one attempt to penetrate them. They were divided into two parties in reference to certain reforms which the better instructed part of the priesthood were endeavoring to introduce, and, as the conservative faction had connections with the Dutch, their antagonists desired to ingratiate themselves with the French; they sought, accordingly, to gain the support of the latter, by making promises, the fulfilment of which they hoped would never be called for, and were very much disinclined to grant, when Anquetil actually appeared to claim it. By various means, however — by liberality in the purchase of manuscripts and payment for instruction, by politic management, by intimidation even — the course of instruction was at last fairly initiated; confidence and frankness then gradually succeeded to mistrust and reticence, as the priests witnessed with admiration the zeal and rapid progress of their pupil, and as the habit of communication wore away their natural shyness of discovering to unsympathizing foreigners matters which to themselves seemed sacred: this had, in reality, been the only obstacle in the way of their free disclosure, and has since that time been entirely removed. Anquetil succeeded in

obtaining a complete copy, in some instances more than one, of all the texts in their possession, and made collations of them with others. He then labored his way through their interpretation with his teacher, the Destur Dârâb, carefully recording everything, and comparing, so far as he was able, parallel passages, in order to satisfy himself of the good faith and trustworthiness of his authority. As their medium of communication, they made use of the modern Persian. He visited moreover their temple, witnessed their religious ceremonies, and informed himself respecting their history, their general condition, customs, and opinions. In September, 1760, he had thus completed to the best of his ability the task he had originally imposed upon himself, and was preparing to undertake another work which he had also had in view, the study of Sanskrit, and the acquisition and translation of the Vedas, when the capture of Pondicherry by the English, and the general breaking up of the French power and influence in India, compelled him to relinquish his further plans, and to return home. This he did in an English vessel, upon which passage and protection had been granted him by the English authorities. He finally reached Paris March 15th, 1762, after an absence of more than seven years. He tarried in England by the way only long enough to make a brief visit to Oxford, and to ascertain, by comparing the manuscripts there with his own, that they contained nothing which he had not also in his possession. He deposited in the Royal Library in Paris a complete set of the texts which had been the main objects of his expedition, and immediately commenced preparing for publication the history of his labors, and full translations of the whole body of the sacred writings. The work appeared in 1771, in three quarto volumes, with the title "Zend-Avesta, Ouvrage de Zoroastre," etc. Besides this, he published in the French literary journals various extended and important treatises on special points in Iranian antiquity and history.

We shall not be prepared to pass intelligent judgment upon Anquetil's labors, or to estimate their absolute value, until we have inquired somewhat further into the character and history of the writings which were their subject and the authority of the interpretation which they represented, and have marked the course pursued by the later studies. So much as this, however, is already evident: the credit cannot be denied him of having undertaken from lofty and disinterested motives, and carried out with rare energy against obstacles of no ordinary character, the work of procuring for Europe the Iranian scriptures, the alleged works of Zoroaster, with what light their then possessors were capable of throwing upon their meaning; of having, moreover, brought a valuable supply of materials within reach of other scholars, and powerfully directed the public attention and interest toward the study. The reception which his published results met with was of a very varied character: while they were hailed by some with enthusiasm, by others they were scouted and despised. Anquetil had, indeed, both provoked opposition and attack, and laid himself open to them; he was arrogant and conceited, and neither a thorough scholar nor a critic of clear insight and cool judgment; he had drawn upon himself the especial displeasure of the English scholars by the depreciating and contemptuous manner in which he had spoken of some among them, and they revenged themselves upon him and his book together. A violent controversy arose: William Jones, then a very young man, led the way, and was followed by Richardson and others. They maintained that both the language and the matter of the pretended Zoroastrian scriptures were a forgery and a fabrication, palmed off upon the credulous and uncritical Anquetil by his Pârsî teachers; or that, even supposing them genuine, they were of so trifling and senseless a character that the labor of rescuing them had been a lost

one. Into the details of this controversy it is not necessary for us to enter; its whole basis and method was far below that which any similar discussion would now exhibit, and we should find neither in the learning nor the spirit of the one side or the other anything which we could admire or which would edify us. The time was not yet come for a proper appreciation of the task which Anquetil had undertaken, or of the manner in which he had executed it. The real weaknesses and imperfections of his work remained unsuspected, until, after an interval of more than fifty years, the study of the texts was again taken up, under new and much more favorable auspices. The Sanskrit language had in the mean time become the property of science; only through its aid was a scientific investigation of the Zoroastrian writings possible; without it, our knowledge of them must ever have remained in much the same state as that in which Anquetil had left it.

Before we enter upon the history of the later labors upon these texts, it will be advisable to take a somewhat particular view of the texts themselves, as regards the various circumstances of their extent and division, the character of their contents, their language, locality, and period, and the history of their collection and conservation.

The sacred canon is made up of several separate portions, differing in age, origin, and character. Foremost among them is the *Yaçna* (called by Anquetil *Izeschné*); its name is identical with the Sanskrit *yajña*, signifying 'offering, sacrifice,' and has essentially the same meaning. It is made up of seventy-two distinct pieces or chapters, called *hâ*. These *hâ* are of very different extent, and of diverse age and character. A considerable number are of only slight interest, containing a bare rehearsal of names and attributes of the sacred personages and objects recognized by the Zoroastrian religion, with monotonous

ascriptions of praise and offerings of homage to them. Other chapters have more individuality and doctrinal or historical importance. One is a complete *yesht* (see below), and bears title as such. The second general division of the Yaçna (chapters 28–53), along with a few passages occurring elsewhere, is written in a dialect that differs perceptibly, though only slightly, from that of all the rest of the sacred writings, and is evidently of greater antiquity. And seventeen chapters of this division constitute the so-called *Gâthâs*, five collections of religious lyrics, each collection written in a different metre. The Gâthâs, now, are the oldest and the most interesting part of the whole Iranian scripture; their relation to the rest may be rudely compared with that of the Vedic hymns to the later Brâhmana literature.[1] It is not impossible that some of these lyrics, with the sacred formulas written in the same dialect, may go back to the time of Zoroaster himself; only here, at any rate, could material so ancient and original be looked for.

Of much the same style and character as the more recent part of the Yaçna is the *Vispered;* the etymology and meaning of the name are not clear. It is divided into twenty-three *karde*, 'sections,' and in extent is hardly more than a seventh of the Yaçna. The Yaçna and Vispered are combined with one another and with a third text, the *Vendidâd*, to make up a liturgical collection which is much used in the Pârsî ceremonial, and which is generally known as the *Vendidâd Sâde:* this name, however, is not significant of anything essentially characterizing the collection, but simply denotes it as "unmixed" (*sâde* meaning 'pure') with the translations into a later dialect which usually accompany each text when written by itself. The combination is in such wise that with the twenty-seven *hâ* of the first part of the Yaçna are intermingled twelve *karde* of the Vispered:

[1] See above, p. 4.

here takes place the first introduction of the Vendidad, whose twenty-two chapters (called *fargard*) are thenceforth variously combined with the remaining divisions of the other two works. The principle upon which the aggregation has been formed, if any there be, has not been pointed out.

The Vendidad is a work of a very different nature from those already noticed: while they are chiefly doctrinal and devotional, this is practical and prescriptive, constituting the moral and ceremonial code of the Zoroastrian religion. The name is a corruption of the title *vî-daeva-dâta*, 'the law against the demons,' or 'established against the *devs*.' It teaches by what means a man may keep himself from such sin and impurity as give the powers of evil dominion over him. The impurity thus provided against is chiefly of a ceremonial character, resulting from intercourse with things unclean and defiling, especially from contact with a dead body; and the bulk of the work consists of a series of very minute directions as to how personal purity may be guarded against such dangers, or recovered when lost. Besides these, there are precepts more properly moral: various offenses against the divine powers are rehearsed, their comparative enormity estimated, and the atonement demanded for each prescribed; on the other hand, that course of conduct is depicted which is most grateful to the eyes of the divine powers, and most tends to secure their favor; no little space, also, is devoted to rules for the treatment of the dog, which this religion regards as a sacred animal. The whole is in the form of colloquies between Ormuzd (Ahura-Mazdâ), the supreme deity, and Zoroaster (Zarathustra), who inquires of the former respecting each particular point, and receives in reply the laws which he is to publish to mankind. The same colloquial form, or that of an inquiry by the prophet at the divine oracle, is occasionally found also in other parts of the texts. To

this body of ceremonial directions, however, have become appended, at the beginning and at the end, certain other chapters, which are by no means the least interesting of the whole collection. Thus, the first *fargard* gives a detailed account of the countries created by the Supreme Being, and furnishes very valuable indications respecting the knowledge of geography possessed by the people among whom it originated, and respecting the geographical position which they themselves occupied; the second describes the reign of Yima upon the earth, and his preparation of an abode of happiness for a certain part of mankind; it illustrates in a striking manner the relation of the ancient Persian and Indian religions, and throws light upon the modern Persian tradition of the earliest period of Iranian history. The last five *fargards* are mainly an assemblage of fragments, in part entirely disconnected and unintelligible; the longest and most interesting of them describes the attempts of the evil spirits to destroy or corrupt Zoroaster; he, however, defies their malice and despises their temptations, and they sink confounded into the darkness.

Next in extent and importance are the *Yesht*. The name is from the same root as Yaçna, and nearly identical with it in meaning. They are twenty-four pieces, of very different length, each addressed to one of the persons or objects held in veneration by the Zoroastrian faith. The longest and most important are those of the fountain Ardvî-Çûra, of the star Tistrya, of Mithra, of the Fervers, or souls of the departed, of the Amshaspand Behram. Each is an exaltation of the object to which it is addressed, accompanied with prayers for blessings and with offerings of homage and worship. They are either direct addresses, or in the form already described, of replies made by Ahura-Mazdâ to the inquiries of his prophet respecting the merits of the several personages to be honored, and the mode and degree of reverence

which should be paid to each. Besides the general light which they thus throw upon the religion of whose sacred records they constitute a part, more than one of them have a particular value as illustrating the epic and heroic traditions of the period in which they were composed. It is recounted, namely, how this and that person had paid adoration to the divinity whose exaltation is the theme of the Yesht, and had received in recompense certain gifts or favors. The personages thus mentioned greet us again among the heroes of the modern epic and historical traditions, as represented especially by the gigantic poem of Firdusi, the Shah-Nameh; and the epithets by which they are characterized, and the favors granted them, in many instances furnish ground for a comparison between the forms of the popular tradition held concerning them in earlier and in later times.

The remaining portions of the sacred writings (which, with the Yeshts, are often comprehended under the name of *Khordeh-Avesta*, 'lesser Avesta') are not of consequence enough to require any special description. They are, briefly, the five *Nyâyish*, so called, pieces not unlike the Yeshts, from which they seem to be in part extracted; the *Gah* and *Si-ruzeh*, praises and adorations paid to the divisions of the day and the days of the month; *Aferîn* and *Afrigân*, praises and thanksgivings; and a few small fragments, prayers for special occasions, and the like.

The whole body of canonical scriptures is called by the Pârsîs the *Avesta:* the origin of this appellation, and its proper signification, are not certainly known. Their collective extent is not very considerable, and their absolute material content is considerably less even than it seems to be, owing to the repetitions and parallelisms in which they abound.

The Avesta is written in a language to which, by an unfortunate blunder, the name of *Zend* has been given,

and now, by long usage, become so firmly attached that it is perhaps in vain to hope that they will ever be separated. To what the name Zend properly applies, we shall see hereafter. If it should be regarded as still practicable to change the common usage, and give the language a more appropriate designation, none, it is believed, could be found so simple, and open to so few objections, as *Avestan;* this suggests no theory respecting the age or locality of the dialect, and is supported by the analogy of the term *Vedic*, as applied to the oldest form of the Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas.[1] The Avestan, then, is an ancient Persian language, most nearly akin to that of the Achæmenidan Cuneiform Inscriptions, and probably the ancestor of some, at least, of the modern Persian dialects. The epoch when it was a spoken language cannot be definitely fixed: we have only the most general data for its determination. A comparison of the language itself with its two nearest neighbors on either hand, the Vedic Sanskrit, dating from fifteen centuries before Christ, and the Achæmenidan Persian, a thousand years later, leads to no certain results. The Avestan is, indeed, in point of linguistic development, a more modern dialect than the former, and, though less clearly so, more ancient than the latter, so that in respect to time also we should be inclined to place it somewhere between the two; yet little reliance can be placed upon such an inference, since even closely related dialects are known to develop and change at very different rates of progress. Other general considerations, however, seem to refer us to a time as early as the first half of the thousand years before Christ as being that of the Avestan language. It has been already pointed out that the different portions of the text are, to some extent at least, the product of different periods, and that, while

[1] The name "Old Bactrian" (*alt-baktrisch*) is at present in quite general use among scholars as substitute for "Zend." The principal objection to it is that it implies more definite and certain knowledge of the locality of the dialect than we actually possess.

some passages may perhaps be as old as the time of Zoroaster himself, the bulk of the collection is of such a character that it cannot be supposed to have originated until long after. There is no difficulty in assuming that the language which had been rendered sacred by the revelation in it of the first scriptures should be kept up by the priests, and made the medium of further authoritative communications. But until the texts shall have undergone a more minute examination than they have yet received, and until our knowledge of the details of Persian archæology is advanced much beyond its present point, it will be impossible to read the internal history of the collection, and to determine, save in a very general way, the order and interval of its several parts. We cannot yet even fix our earliest limit, by determining the time of the appearance of Zoroaster, and of his activity as a reformer of the ancient religion. The information respecting him which the classic authors obtained from native sources of their own period is so indefinite and inconsistent as to show clearly that the Persians were already at that time unable to give any satisfactory account of him; of course, then, nothing more definite and reliable could be looked for from them at a later date. His genealogy is given in the sacred writings, and he is said to have lived and promulgated his doctrines under a king Vîstâçpa; the later Persian traditions also are consistent in making the same statement respecting him. This king was by Anquetil supposed to be the same with Hystaspes, the father of the first Darius; his opinion was generally accepted as well founded, and the time of the religious law-giver accordingly fixed at 600–500 B. C.: but the identification is now universally acknowledged to be erroneous, and all attempts at reconstructing Persian chronology and history from native authorities, so as to establish in them any points whatever, prior to the reign of the first Sassanid, have been relinquished as futile. We can only con-

clude, from the obscurity which five centuries before Christ seemed to envelop and hide from distinct knowledge the period of the great religious teacher, and from the extension of his doctrines at that time over the whole Iranian territory, even to its western border, that he must have lived at least as early as a thousand years before our era. And the absence in the sacred texts of any mention of Media or Persia indicates clearly that they were composed prior to the conquest of all Iran by the early monarchs of those countries.

Respecting the region in which the Avesta had its origin we may speak with more confidence: it was doubtless Bactria and its vicinity, the northeastern portion of the immense territory occupied by the Iranian people, and far removed from those countries with which the western world came more closely into contact. To give in detail the grounds upon which this opinion is founded would occupy too much time and space here: they are, briefly stated, the relation which the Avestan language sustains to the Indian and to the other Persian dialects, differences of religious customs and institutions from those which we know to have prevailed in the West (as, for instance, that the Avesta knows nothing of the Magi, the priestly caste in Media and in Persia proper), the indirect but important evidences derived from the general character of the texts, the views and conceptions which they represent, the state of culture and mode of life which they indicate as belonging to the people among whom they originated, and, especially, the direct geographical notices which they contain. The two oldest records of the Indo-European family, then, were composed in countries which lie almost side by side, and at periods not very far removed from one another. It is no wonder that their languages exhibit so near a kindred that the one has been deciphered and read by the aid of the other — as we shall see to have been the case, when we take up again the history of the later Avestan studies.

It is claimed by the Pârsîs that the Avesta is the work of Zoroaster himself; with how little ground, will have been already sufficiently shown by what has been said respecting the character and period of the different parts. Nowhere in the texts themselves is any such claim set up: they profess only to be a record of the revelations made to the prophet, and the doctrines promulgated by him. The Pârsîs also assert that Zoroaster's writings originally composed twenty-one books, or *Nosks*, and covered the whole ground of religious and secular knowledge; as the Egyptians claimed the same thing in behalf of their forty-two books of Thoth. Of these they say that one, the twentieth, has been preserved complete, being the Vendidad; while of the others only fragments have come down to later times. But, considering the so evidently incomplete and fragmentary, as well as incongruous and compounded, character of the Vendidad, it seems altogether probable that this tradition is not more valuable than the other, and that it in truth is nothing more than the expression of a consciousness on the part of the Pârsîs that they possess only a part of the Scriptures which had once been theirs. Let us further follow their traditions respecting the history of their sacred books. Strangely enough, all the native authorities agree in attributing the first great trial and persecution of the Zoroastrian religion, the dispersion of its followers and the destruction of its records, to Alexander the Great. The introduction of this personage at all into the Persian legendary history, which is silent respecting the time before and after him for centuries, is remarkable and difficult to explain. The fabulous account of the great conqueror's life and deeds, which, coming from a Greek source, was translated with variations and additions into almost every Oriental language, and obtained universal diffusion and popularity throughout the East,[1] doubtless

[1] See Spiegel, *Die Alexander-Sage bei den Orientalen* (Leipzig, 1851), and

had much to do with it; but whether this was the sole efficient cause, or whether, as is more probable, the story may have attached itself to some faint recollections of the hero, and of the changes which followed upon his conquests, need not be discussed here. We can see, however, that it might be easy to connect with his appearance the decline of the ancient native religion, and to convert the foreign subverter of the Persian empire into a persecutor of the Persian faith. There was, in truth, at and after his time, a grand falling off in the honor and reverence paid to this faith: if not oppressed and persecuted, it had lost the exclusive patronage and support of government; it had ceased to be the only acknowledged creed; the foreign, or only half-Persianized, dynasties of the Græco-Baktrians and the Parthians showed it no especial favor; Grecian influences, Judaism, Christianity, disputed with it the preferences of the people. With the overthrow of the Parthian rule, and the establishment of the Sassanian dynasty, began a new order of things. This was, in effect, a successful revolution of Persian nationality against the dominion of foreign rulers and foreign ideas, and had as a natural consequence the reëstablishment of the national religion on something like its ancient footing. The Persian traditions are so definite and concordant respecting this great religious revival, and there are so many other corroborative evidences to the same effect, that its actuality cannot reasonably be questioned. During the long interval of neglect and oppression, say the traditions, the sacred books, even such as were saved from destruction by the tyrant Iskender (Alexander), had become lost, and the doctrines and rites of the Zoroastrian religion were nearly forgotten. King Ardeshir gathered from all parts of the land a great assembly of Mobeds, to the number, according to some,

an article by President Woolsey in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. iv. p. 357 *seq.*

of forty thousand, and, from their memory and recitation of the scriptures, so much of the latter as was not forgotten was again collected and committed to writing. This, too, is a notice which there is much reason for believing to be in the main authentic. The whole state and condition of the collection, as it exists in our hands, indicates that its material must have passed through some process analogous to this. The incomplete and fragmentary character of the books that compose it, the frequent want of connection, or the evident interpolations of longer or shorter passages, the hopelessly corrupt state of portions of the text, the awkward style and entire grammatical incorrectness displayed by others, all go to show that it must be in some measure an assemblage of fragments, combined without a full understanding of their meaning and connection. To this is to be added the evidence afforded by the alphabetic character in which the texts are written.[1] The Avestan character is of Semitic origin, akin to the Syriac alphabets of the commencement of the Christian era, and closely resembling that used in the inscriptions and upon the coins of the earliest Sassanids, of which it seems a developed form. It cannot, then, have been from the beginning the medium of preservation of the Zoroastrian scriptures; the Avesta cannot have been written in it before the time of Christ. But it is a very difficult matter to suppose a deliberate change in the method of writing a text esteemed sacred, unless when peculiar circumstances require or strongly favor it; the character comes to partake of the sanctity of the matter written in it, and is almost as unalterable. It could hardly be, excepting when the body of scripture was assembled and cast into a new form, that it should be transcribed in a character before unused. The Sassanian reconstruction of the Zoroastrian canon, and its

1 Professor Roth has discussed these points in the *Allg. Monatsschrift* (Braunschweig) for March, 1853.

committal to writing in an alphabet of that period, must probably have taken place together.

It may now be inquired in what relation the text of the Avesta, as it lies before us, stands to this original Sassanian compilation. Our oldest existing manuscripts date from the early part of the fourteenth century, or not less than a thousand years later than the compilation, and most of them are considerably more modern. Whatever their age, they all come also from the same region—from eastern Persia, namely, the country of Yezd and Kerman; the Pârsîs in India lost, as before noticed, at the time of the Mohammedan conquest, most or all of the sacred books which they had first brought with them, and were obliged to supply themselves anew from that region, the only one where any relic of the ancient religion still survived in Iran. And they all offer the same text; there are, indeed, very considerable varieties of reading among them as regards the orthography and division of the words, so that not unfrequently different grammatical forms and different combinations seem to show themselves; yet, sentence by sentence, and page by page, they are found to agree in presenting the same matter in the same order; their disagreements are to be charged to the ignorance and carelessness of the copyists; they all represent a single original. And this original Westergaard[1] supposes to have been the eastern Persian copy of the Sassanian canon; assuming that but few copies of it were at first made, and that a single one became the source of supply to a whole district. These are points upon which further investigation will doubtless throw a clearer light; but it may be regarded as upon the whole highly probable that we have in our hands nearly or quite all the Zoroastrian scriptures which were found recoverable at the time when their recovery was attempted, and that we may hope to restore, at least approximately, the original text as then constructed.

[1] Preface to his *Zendavesta*, p. 21.

The Avesta, as it has thus been described, does not constitute the whole sacred literature of the Pârsîs. It is accompanied by other matter, chiefly translations and explications of its text, of later date, and in other tongues. We have, first, a version of a considerable portion of it in a language called *Pehlevî* or *Huzvâresh*. It occurs in the manuscripts intermingled with the original text, and following it sentence by sentence. To this version, now, belongs of right the name *Zend;* the word properly denotes, not the language in which the Avesta is written, but the translation of the Avesta into another language; its etymology is not perfectly clear, but it seems, according to the most plausible interpretation, to signify a work made for the common, popular advantage, a reduction of a difficult original to a more readily and generally intelligible form. The language and period of the Zend will be considered a little further on. Mingled, again, with the Pehlevî version, as interpretations of it, or glosses upon it, are found passages which are styled *Pâ-Zend*. The dialect in which they are composed is called, for convenience's sake, the *Pârsî;* it is an older form of the modern Persian language, not widely different from the latter, nor far removed from its oldest monuments in point of time. The Pârsî is best known through Spiegel's grammar[1] of the dialect, which contains also specimens of texts composed in it. The glosses above alluded to are not its only records; parts of the Avestan and Pehlevî writings are translated into it, and a few portions of what is accounted as sacred scripture, such as the Patets, and some of the Aferîns, are found in Pârsî alone. No certain results have yet been arrived at respecting the time and place of this purely Persian dialect, but it is regarded with much probability as having been in use after the downfall of the Sassanian monarchy, among the yet remaining followers of the ancient faith in the eastern and

[1] *Grammatik der Parsisprache, nebst Sprachproben*, Leipzig, 1851.

central portions of Iran. It has no peculiar written character, but is written indifferently in that of the Avesta or in the Arabic.

To return now to the Zend, or version of the Avesta in Pehlevî. Respecting this peculiar and difficult dialect there has been much discussion and difference of opinion; nor are its character and period even yet fully established. The views which have been most generally held with regard to it are those brought forward by Spiegel.[1] According to him, the Pehlevî of the Pârsî sacred books was identical with the Pehlevî of the early Sassanian monarchs, found on their coins and in their inscriptions, and was accordingly to be regarded as the language of the Persian court at that period, the vernacular into which the sacred texts were at the time of their collection and arrangement translated, in order to a better and more extended knowledge of them. It bore a composite character, its basis being Persian, and that of a stamp not greatly differing from the form of the language still current, while a large share of its stock of words was Semitic, resembling most nearly the Aramaic of the period. Its proper home would then be the western frontier of the empire, where Iranian and Semitic nations and languages bordered upon one another. But it was not in the strictest sense a spoken dialect; it was rather a learned or book-language, into which Aramaic words were adopted at the pleasure of the writer, somewhat as Arabic words into the modern Persian. Westergaard, on the contrary, maintains that the Pehlevî of the early Sassanids and that of the Zend are two entirely distinct languages; that the former is a true Semitic dialect, while the latter is pure Persian, and, in fact, identical with the Pârsî, from which it differs only in the mode of writing. And the

[1] See an article by him in Höfer's *Zeitschrift*, vol. i., and his translation of the Vendidad, second Excurs; also, especially, his Grammar of the Huzvâresh Language (Vienna, 1856).

difficulty of making out the true form of the text is due not only to the ambiguities of the written character, but also to "the great number of arbitrary signs or ideographs for pronouns, prepositions, and particles, which have the appearance of real words;" and to "the adoption of Semitic words strangely marked by peculiar signs, which pertain to the writing, and do not enter into the language." If, then, these signs are properly understood and translated, the Pehlevî becomes simple Pârsî, the Zend passage becomes a Pâ-Zend. The disguising of the translation in this strange garb, which causes its language to assume a foreign appearance, Westergaard conceives to have been a priestly device for confining the knowledge of it to a few, and giving those few an added importance in the eyes of their brethren. Haug, again,[1] attributes to the Pehlevî a great antiquity as a pure Semitic dialect, and holds that its written form was used later by the Iranians as a mere vehicle for expressing an Iranian dialect, each Semitic word having substituted for it, in reading, its Iranian synonym; while Iranian endings and other signs were often added to the written words, simply to facilitate the transfer.

At any rate, whatever may be its age and the character of its language, this Zend has been the principal medium through which the later Persians have kept up their knowledge of their sacred scriptures, and the source from which the modern versions have been drawn. It is therefore of high value to the understanding, partly of the Avesta, partly of the history of Avestan interpretation.

Besides the Zend, there is a considerable body of Pehlevî literature, in part of very recent date, in the hands of the Pârsîs. Its best known work is the *Bundehesh*, a cosmogonical and religio-philosophical treatise of no great

[1] See especially his *Essay on Pahlavî*, in the introduction to Hoshangji's *Old Pahlavi-Pazand Glossary* (Bombay and London, 1870). Prof. Sachau, of Vienna (*Zeitsch. d. D. Morg. Ges.* xxiv. 723, 1870), gives his assent to Haug's view.

antiquity ;[1] others are the *Ardai Virâf-nâmeh*, which has been claimed to be a Persian redaction of the Christian Ascension of Isaiah ; the Minokhired, a theological colloquy between the Sage and Heavenly Wisdom ;[2] the *Dîn kart*, and so on.[3] We hear of Pehlevî materials as made use of by Firdusi in preparing his great historical poem, but none of them have been preserved to modern times.

It remains further only to mention the translations of the Avesta made in India itself, and into Indian languages. A Sanskrit version of the Yaçna, or rather of its Zend, was made, about four centuries ago, by two Pârsî priests, Neriosengh and Ormuzdiar. A similar work was commenced upon the Vendidad, but carried only to the end of the sixth Fargard ; and even the portion completed appears to have become lost. Some of the smaller pieces and fragments also exist in Sanskrit translations. Of late years, more than one edition of the Avesta has been published by the Pârsîs in India themselves, accompanied with versions in their present vernacular, the Guzerâtî ; they have for us, of course, only an inferior interest.

Having thus taken a general view of the history and present condition of the Zoroastrian scriptures, we will go back to trace further the course of European studies upon them. As already remarked, more than fifty years elapsed after the publication of Anquetil's book before another hand was laid earnestly and effectively to the work. In the interval, the controversy as to the genuineness of the writings in question had been settled wholly in their favor, at least upon the Continent ; in England it would seem as if some remnant of the old factious disbelief had endured down even to the present time. The few voices which had been raised in France and Germany

[1] It has been published by Westergaard (Copenhagen, 1853: in lithographic fac-simile only), and by Justi (Leipzig, 1868: with translation, glossary, etc.).

[2] Published in 1871 (London), in its Pârsî form, with Neriosengh's Sanskrit version, notes, glossary, etc., by E. W. West.

[3] See especially the works of Spiegel and Haug, already referred to.

on the side of Anquetil's opponents had been overborne and silenced; and archæologists and historians were busy with reconstructing the fabric of Persian antiquity from the new materials thus furnished. All parties, on whatsoever points they disagreed, united in assuming the correctness and reliability of Anquetil's translation. The time was coming, however, when this was to be made a subject of inquiry, and to be thoroughly and competently tested. When the Sanskrit began to become known to western scholars, the remarkable resemblance to it of the Avestan language could not fail to be at once remarked: this was urged by some as a new and convincing proof that the alleged Persian scriptures had originated, or been concocted, on Indian ground: others, however, beheld the matter in its true relations, and hailed with joy the prospect of being able by means of the Indian language to arrive at a more sure and satisfactory knowledge of the ancient Persian records. It was in the years 1826–1830 that the new movement began to show itself with effect. In 1826 the celebrated Danish scholar, Rask, published a little treatise "On the Age and Genuineness of the Zend Language and the Zend-Avesta," etc. He was a Sanskrit scholar, and a general linguistic investigator of rare talents and acquirements; he had travelled in Persia and India, and had brought home to Copenhagen a valuable collection of Avestan manuscripts. His essay was far in advance of anything that had yet appeared, for establishing the character and value of the Avesta, and the relations of its language: it included also a greatly improved analysis and determination, absolute and comparative, of the alphabet of the latter. The same year, Olshausen, a professor in the University of Kiel, was sent by the Danish government to Paris to examine and collate the Avestan manuscripts lying there; and, upon his return, the publication of a critical edition of the Vendidad was commenced by him. Its first part, con-

taining four Fargards, appeared in 1829, a lithographed text, with full critical apparatus; but nearly the whole edition was soon after destroyed by fire, and the prosecution of the undertaking was abandoned. Olshausen's material has since passed into the hands of Spiegel.

In 1829 appeared also, in the "Journal Asiatique" (Paris), the first contribution to the study of the Avesta from a scholar who was destined to do more than any or than all others to place that study upon its true and abiding foundation, and to whose investigations the progress of Avestan science was to be linked for many years to come. This was Eugène Burnouf. He was Professor of Sanskrit in the Collége de France, and already known as a zealous cultivator of the knowledge of the Orient, to which he had, in conjunction with Lassen, contributed in 1826 the well known "Essai sur le Pali." His attention became naturally at that period directed toward the Zoroastrian texts, and a slight examination and comparison of them with the translation of Anquetil led him at once to important results with reference to the character of the latter. He found it highly inaccurate, and so full of errors as to be hardly reliable even as a general representation of the meaning of its original. Among the manuscripts brought home by Anquetil, however, he found another translation, intelligible to him, which was plainly much more faithful than that of the French scholar: this was the Sanskrit version of the Yaçna by Neriosengh, mentioned above. He was forced, then, to conclude that, during the three centuries which had elapsed between Neriosengh and Anquetil, the Pârsîs must have lost in a great degree the knowledge of their own sacred writings. But it may be remarked here that Spiegel has since endeavored to show[1] that Anquetil's inaccuracy was due, not entirely to the ignorance of his Pârsî instructors, but in part also to his own faulty method of

[1] See *Zeitsch. d. Deutsch. Morg. Gesellsch.* i. 243.

communicating with and interrogating them; inasmuch as he seemed to have obtained from them hardly more than an interpretation of the separate words of the text, which he then himself, with more or less success, converted into a connected translation. Accordingly, Burnouf could not do otherwise than lay Anquetil aside, and commence rather with the help of Neriosengh the task of investigating the Yaçna anew, to discover its true meaning. But he by no means made himself a slavish follower of his Indian authority. The Sanskrit grammar and lexicon were a scarcely less direct, and in many important respects a more trustworthy guide to the knowledge of the Avestan language, than the translation itself: and Burnouf's familiarity with the former, rare for that period, furnished the true medium of scientific investigation to a mind that was admirably qualified to perceive and make use of its advantages. He anticipated, in a manner, the science of comparative philology, just then coming into being, created his own method, and commenced his investigations with a degree of learning, acuteness, and success, that from the first attracted general attention and acknowledgment. The main features of the Avestan grammar, the phonetic value of the characters, the systems of verbal and nominal inflection, the modes of construction, were readily established from the analogy of the Indian tongue; and the Sanskrit lexicon, the roots of the Vedic and classic dialects, with the aid, in a less degree, of all the other kindred languages, ancient and modern, furnished a clew to the meaning of words. In this way it was possible to test the correctness of the Pârsî interpretation, amend its errors, and arrive at an understanding of the texts more accurate by far than their native possessors could boast.

The chief record of Burnouf's labors is his "Commentaire sur le Yaçna," tome i., published in Paris in 1833. This contains, in the form of a commentary upon a por-

tion of text, a collection of very extensive and detailed researches into the language and matter of these writings, and the proper method of their interpretation. It was upon such a scale, however, that the whole large quarto volume, of 800 pages, contained the exposition only of the first of the seventy-two chapters, or *hâ*, of the Yaçna: such a work evidently could never be carried on to completion, and in fact even no continuation of it ever appeared. In the "Journal Asiatique" of 1840–46,[1] Burnouf did indeed take up and treat, in a similar manner, but with less detail, the ninth chapter of the same text; yet, before it was quite finished, his attention was so drawn off by other subjects that he seems to have laid the study of the Avesta entirely aside, and even had his life been longer spared, it is not probable that he would have made further contributions of importance to it: at any rate, the task of elaborating and publishing a critical text and interpretation of the whole Avesta would never have been accomplished by him; even before his death, which took place in 1852, this had passed out of his hands into those of others. It was hoped that he might have left behind him material of value, but nothing was found among his papers in such a state as should render its publication advisable. We have omitted to mention in its chronological order the publication, in 1829–43, under his superintendence and by his care, of a lithographed fac-simile of the finest of Anquetil's manuscripts, containing the Vendidad-Sade. This, although a costly work, and furnishing, of course, a very incorrect text, aided materially to render these writings more generally accessible, and to furnish to other scholars the means of critically examining, or of adding to, the results arrived at by Burnouf himself. Of such facilities the German scholars, in particular, had not failed to avail themselves.

[1] Published also separately, with the title *Etudes sur la Langue et sur les Textes Zends.*

So Bopp, during the whole course of Burnouf's labors, had been pursuing independent investigations, especially into the grammatical forms of the Avestan language, the results of which were made public in his Comparative Grammar of the Indo-European Languages. Lassen, Benfey, Holtzmann, and others, had made from time to time contributions of value to the knowledge of the Avesta; Roth had, in more than one striking article, illustrated various points in the ancient Iranian religious or traditionary history. Brockhaus, in 1850, furnished an exceedingly practical and useful aid to the general study, in the form of a transcription into Latin characters of the text of Burnouf's Vendidad-Sade, with the various readings of an edition which the Pârsîs themselves had put forth in Bombay (1832?), a complete Index Verborum, and a glossary, containing a summary of the explanations of words and forms which had up to that time been given by various scholars.

During the same time, two eminent scholars were known to be engaged in making preparations for the complete publication and illustration of the Zoroastrian scriptures. One of these was Westergaard, professor in the University of Copenhagen. He had at his command, besides the materials collected by his predecessors and deposited in European libraries, certain manuscripts which he had himself obtained in the course of a journey through Persia and India, undertaken partly for this purpose, in the years 1842–43. His plan was a very comprehensive one, including the publication of the Avestan text in its entirety, with English version, vocabulary, and grammar, and a history and comparative view of all the Iranian languages; and, further, a history of the nations of Iran, and an account of their ancient civil and religious institutions. The full execution of this grand plan seems to have been abandoned; at any rate, only one volume has been thus far published (Copen-

hagen, 1852–54), containing the text of the Avesta, with selections from the various readings of the manuscripts, and with a valuable preface.

The other is Professor Friedrich Spiegel, of Erlangen, in Bavaria. His contributions to our knowledge of the Zoroastrian religion and its sacred books have been more abundant and fruitful than those of any other person — as will have been indicated by the references already made here to various of his works; the progress of the study was, in fact, during many years bound up with his investigations, in somewhat the same manner as earlier with those of Burnouf. His plan was formed, its foundation laid, and its execution begun, at nearly the same time with Westergaard's, but it has been much more persistently and steadily carried out. Besides numerous articles, essays, and criticisms, contributed to the leading periodicals of Germany, in illustration of special points or in review of the labors of others, he has given us a long series of more elaborate and extended works. Of his edition of the Avesta itself, two volumes have appeared, one (1853) containing the Vendidad, the other (1858) the Yaçna and Vispered; the text is accompanied with full critical apparatus, and has the Zend, or Pehlevî version, also added. A rendering into German of these texts, with notes and detailed auxiliary essays (*Excursen*), was put forth nearly contemporaneously (1852–59); and an added volume (1863) presented in the same style the remaining part, the Khordeh-Avesta.[1] A commentary on both text and translation, in two volumes, was issued somewhat later (1865–68). Neriosengh's Sanskrit version was edited and annotated in 1861. Of each of the three forms of Iranian language exhibited in the Zoroastrian literature we have received a grammar: of the Pârsî in 1851, of the Pehlevî in

[1] An English version of Spiegel's German translation of the whole Avesta was made by Dr. A. H. Bleek, and published at London in 1864.

1856, of the Avestan in 1867; and to the Pehlevî grammar belongs, as sequel, a volume on "the traditional literature of the Pârsîs, exhibited in its relation to the neighboring literatures" (1860). Finally, the geography, history, and antiquities of Iran have been treated in a volume (in part, of collected essays) entitled "Iran, the Country between the Indus and Tigris" (1863); and a yet more exhaustive exhibition of them has been begun in an "Iranian Antiquities" (*Eranische Alterthumskunde*), of which the first part (760 pages, octavo), including the geography, ethnography, and earliest history, was published in 1871.

Spiegel has trained up pupils, also, who have done independent work in the same field. So especially F. Justi, who, besides the edition of the Bundehesh already referred to, has published (1864) a "Manual of the Zend Language," containing dictionary, grammar, and chrestomathy, worked out with exceeding care and elaboration, and presented in convenient and attractive form. And Professor C. Kossowich, of St. Petersburg, has given us (1865) a set of selections from the various parts of the Avesta, with translation and notes, answering the purpose of a chrestomathy; and also (in three parts, 1867–69–71) the complete text of the Gâthâs, similarly accompanied.

Very conspicuous, moreover, among the more recent students of the Avesta is M. Haug, now professor at Munich. His first public contribution to this department of knowledge was an attempt at the exposition of part of a Gâthâ ("Journal of the German Oriental Society," vols. vii., viii., 1853–54); it was followed up, a few years later, by a like work upon the whole body of Gâthâs (*Abhandlungen* of the same Society, 1858–60). Before the latter was complete, Dr. Haug was called to Puna, in western India, as professor of Sanskrit; and, during several years of residence there, and of intercourse

with the Pârsîs themselves, he continued his studies, and aided and incited those of the native scholars, acquiring a consideration and influence among them which no other European had attained. His principal publication there was a volume of four "Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsees" (Bombay, 1862), of which the second is an outline of Zend grammar, the only one hitherto published in English. Since his return to Germany, besides putting forth various essays and criticisms, he has edited, with considerable additions, a couple of ancient glossaries, Zend-Pehlevî and Pehlevî-Pâzend, prepared for publication by the Destur Hoshangji (Bombay and London, 1867–70).

By the labors, now, of these scholars (and of others who have been passed unmentioned), the first task of Zoroastrian study has been pretty satisfactorily accomplished: the whole traditional material has been placed before us, in the best form that the circumstances permit. But the second and far more difficult task — that of discovering and correcting the errors of the tradition, of establishing the true form and relation of the sacred texts, and ascertaining their whole meaning — is hardly more than begun. The grand outlines of Zoroastrian doctrine and precept are made out; but on the interpretation of every chapter and paragraph, of almost every sentence, rest numerous uncertainties. In the old days of ignorance, Anquetil's version was implicitly accepted as authoritative; now that its worthlessness has been proved, there is nothing, and there may long be nothing, to take its place. In behalf of Spiegel's translation, neither its author nor any one else would claim more than a temporary and provisional value. The Avesta is far harder to master than the Veda, because the materials for its elucidation are both less abundant and less comprehensible; and if students of the Veda have to confess their present inability to render with certainty con-

siderable portions of its text, and their fear that much will remain forever an insoluble enigma, it would be wholly unreasonable to expect agreement and certainty among the interpreters of the Avesta. And as among Vedic scholars there has recently been lively discussion respecting the whole method of interpretation, especially as regards the value of the native tradition as an element in it,[1] so the same controversy is still in progress, with even greater vehemence, on Avestan ground. Here it is Spiegel who is the leading advocate of the native interpreters, and who goes so far in his advocacy as, in the opinion of his opponents, to lay himself fairly open to the charge of shutting his eyes to convincing light, if brought in from beyond the boundaries of Iran, and of making it his first principle to be true to the tradition, and only his second to be true to the text. The contrary ground is defended by others, especially by Roth, who has recently, after long absorption in other studies, taken up anew the Avesta, and brought to bear upon it his great learning and his rare sagacity of combination and acuteness of conjecture.[2] The controversy (although a regretable violence of tone has been introduced into it by some of the younger participants) is a legitimate and healthy one, and can result only in advancement to the cause of sound learning. It has to do with a matter of degree only; for the connection between the Avestan and Vedic languages, and the oldest institutions of Iran and of India, is, as all parties hold, an exceedingly close one, and in both points India offers what is more ancient and original. There would hardly have been any Zend philology, but for the aid of the Sanskrit; and the full admission of Sanskrit as auxiliary is necessary to its further progress and perfection.

[1] See above, p. 100 *seq.*

[2] See his *Contributions to the Interpretation of the Avesta*, in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society*, vol. xxv. 1871: to which Spiegel has replied in the same volume, and Haug in a pamphlet on the *Ahuna-vairya* formula or prayer (Munich, 1872).

We have thus reviewed the history of the Avesta, and of the labor which has been devoted to its preservation and interpretation, both in the East and in the West, from its origin down to the present time. It may now be inquired what advantage we are to derive from our possession of it; how it is to us a valuable recovery from among the lost treasures of ancient literature. Such questions were once asked in a disparaging and contemptuous spirit; Anquetil was derided by some of his contemporaries for having suffered a farrago of nonsense and puerilities to be palmed off upon him by his Pârsî teachers as the works of the sage Zoroaster; for having wasted his zeal and efforts in acquiring for Europe a worthless text, which had no claim upon our regard or study. And it is true that if the object sought to be attained by bringing the Avesta to the West had been the acquisition for the latter of new treasures of profound wisdom, elevated religious sentiment, and inspired and inspiring poetry, then the undertaking could not be regarded as crowned with success. Much of the reproach of inflated emptiness brought against the work as interpreted by Anquetil belonged, it is true, only to his interpretation of it, yet the minute details of a trivial ceremonial, and the monotonous repetition of formulas of praise and homage, of which it is actually, to a considerable extent, made up, as well as its depiction of conceptions and customs sometimes unreasonable or offensive, were not calculated to attract by virtue of their own intrinsic interest. Such, however, is not the point of view from which the value of a recovery like this will now be judged; such are not the aims and expectations with which we study the records of primeval thought and culture; we do not go to them to learn religion, or philosophy, or science, nor to have our hearts touched and swayed by the surpassing power of poetic thoughts and fancies: we go to read the early history of the human race, to trace out the

efforts of man at comprehending and making himself master of his circumstances; to obtain light respecting the origin of ideas and institutions; to derive information as to the relationship, and intercourse, and mutual influence of ancient nations. It would enter into no cultivated mind now to question the high worth of writings of undoubted authenticity coming down from a remote antiquity, because they were found to be deficient in literary merit, when judged by modern standards; or because in the character of the mind they portrayed, and the conditions reflected in them, there was much to lament and condemn. An increased value, of course, is conferred upon any literary remains by superiority of absolute merit, when considered simply as works of the human mind, without reference to the place or period of their production; and again, if they be regarded in the light of historical documents, it is plain that the higher their character, the higher was the intellectual and moral development of the nation which originated them, and the more important will be the illustration of its history, and the more valuable the instruction to be derived therefrom. Yet the story of the human mind is hardly less full of interest in its weaknesses, imperfections, and errors, than in its successes and proudest triumphs, and lessons almost as noteworthy are to be learned in the one case as in the other. The sum of interest attaching to the history of an ancient people will depend, not solely upon the degree of culture, or the extent of empire, to which that people may have attained, but also upon its position, connections, and influence, and upon the ability of its records to throw light upon the condition and fates of other peoples in whom we also feel a high interest.

Let us take, then, briefly such a view of Persian nationality and culture, in their history and relations, as will enable us to appreciate the value of the new illustration of them which is furnished by the Avesta.

In the first place, the Iranian people is of our own kindred, a branch of the great Indo-European family, to which we, along with all the most highly civilized races of the present age, belong. Its history, accordingly, constitutes a part of the history of this most important division of the human race. The Indo-European nations are a band of brothers, descended from one ancestor ; they had all a common starting point, and, for a time, a common history, widely scattered as they now are over the face of the earth; they had common beliefs and institutions, and a common language, different as they seem to be in all these respects to one who regards only their present condition; there is a family likeness among them, distinguishing them from all other nations, much as thousands of years have done to efface it. We have, then, before us for a task the investigation of the history of this family as a family ; we have not only to follow up, so far as their records will allow, the story of each separate member ; we have to strive to penetrate beyond this into the darkness of the ante-historic period, to discover the place where they dwelt together, the conditions which were common to them all, the epoch of their dispersion, the wanderings and adventures of each on its way to the possession of the seat in which we finally find it established. And, of course, the further back we can in any instance penetrate, the nearer will be our approach to the primitive time, and the more direct the light which will be thrown upon the common antiquity of the family. Now Persia is, in a certain sense, the elder brother of the family, and deserving of especial honor from the rest, since it was the first to assume that importance in the eyes of the world which the family has ever since maintained, and promises henceforth always to maintain ; the prominence of the Indo-European races, as actors in the great drama of universal history, commences with the era of Persian empire. And the Persian language, and the Persian institutions, as rep-

resented to us by the Avesta, lead us back nearer to the primitive period than do those of any other nation, with the exception only of the Indian. It is in part, too, as auxiliary to India, that Persia offers contributions of value to general Indo-European history. It is now becoming familiarly known how much the latter depends for its illustration upon Indian archæology; but the relation between Persia and India is so intimate that each aids in the comprehension of the other; the Veda and Avesta, those two most venerable documents of Indo-European history, illuminate each other's pages, and, taken together, lay before our eyes a view of the condition of that primitive epoch when the Indian and Persian peoples were still dwelling together, one nation in language, institutions, and territory; an epoch more than a thousand years remoter in the annals of the family than is reached even by Greek tradition.

Iran itself, apart from the genealogical relations of its people, is of consequence enough to render the fullest illustration of its history a thing greatly to be desired. From the earliest commencement of recorded history down to the present time, it has been eminent among the nations of the earth. The extent of Persian empire in its period of highest glory is hardly surpassed by that which Roman dominion attained centuries later. Its overthrow by the Macedonian conqueror was but a momentary fall: we might almost say, only the overthrow of a corrupt royalty and nobility. Under the Parthian and Sassanian dynasties, Iranian nationality reasserted itself, and its new life was far from inglorious. It sank again, completely and finally, as it seemed, before the onset of Mohammedan valor and religious enthusiasm, yet it reacted powerfully upon its conquerors; the influence exerted by Persian culture upon the comparatively uncivilized Arab tribes was great and controlling; their literature and science had in great measure a Persian origin. And once more Iran

raised its head; after three hundred years of servitude, there was yet vigor of life enough left in the old race to penetrate, and animate anew with a Persian spirit, even the foreign doctrines and institutions which had been imposed upon it; its independence was at least partially recovered, and with the eleventh century commenced a new era of Persian literature, whose productions are the most brilliant flowers grown on eastern soil. The names of Firdusi, of Hafiz, of Jami, of Saadi, are worshipped in the East, and honored in the West; their works have more of that intrinsic literary merit which endears them to all times and countries than any others which Oriental nations have originated. Arms and literature have combined to extend Persian influence far beyond the limits of Iran; it is felt all the way from Constantinople to Calcutta. Turkish and Hindustânî are thickly set with Persian words; Persian is the language of courts, and of the elegantly educated, and Persian classics are the favorite models for imitation in every branch of composition.

Such is the race of whose ancient language and literature the Avesta, together with the translations and related fragments accompanying it, is, save a few inscriptions, the only surviving representative. From such remains, of course, we do not look for direct contributions to the external history of Iran. Nor is that what was especially to be desired. The general features of the story were already before us, derived from other sources. What we most wanted in addition was clear and reliable information as to the genealogical position of the Persian people, and such an insight into their native character, and such a view of their earliest institutions, as should serve for a key to the after development of both, and to the relations of their various recorded phases. When we recall with what painstaking industry had been wont to be collected from the classic authors a scanty list of Persian words, of doubtful authenticity, for the purpose of shedding light

upon the position occupied by that people among the races of men, we see clearly of what value is the abundant supply of evidence furnished by the Avesta. The modern Persian showed satisfactorily, it is true, that Iran was peopled by a race of Indo-European origin; but it is a language of so altered and modernized a form, that hardly more than this general conclusion could have been derived from it with any certainty. Its deficiencies might have been partly supplied by the Cuneiform Inscriptions of the Achæmenidan monarchs, yet it was mainly by the aid of the Avestan that these were themselves deciphered and made available. The whole field of Persian ethnology and philology has been brightly illuminated by the Avesta, and made one of the best understood, as well as most instructive and interesting, of all those which are open to science in this department.

But in one or two important particulars the Avesta adds, directly and indirectly, to our knowledge even of the external history of the Iranian peoples. The classic writers had dealt almost exclusively with the western provinces, and without this new authority we should have known little of the eastern and northeastern regions of Iran: we should never have suspected that the latter were not only the most ancient home of the race, but also the birthplace of its civilization and religion; the true national centre, whose importance in the general sum of the national history, as estimated by popular recollection and tradition, was decidedly superior to that of the West. It is well known that the modern Persians are in possession of a traditionary account of their race, which professes to cover its whole history, from the earliest to the latest times. This account is presented to us in the great poem of Firdusi, the *Shah-Nameh*, or Book of Kings, one of the earliest and most famous productions of the new era of Persian literature, and one of the most remarkable works which any Oriental literature can boast; a true

epic, in which the mythic and heroic legends of the olden time, after being long preserved and handed down by tradition, laid up in the national memory, and worked over, and developed, and systematized, by the national mind, are finally reduced to form, and woven together into one connected story, by a national poet, whose version is then universally accepted, and becomes the acknowledged and credited history of the people. In this epic we read nothing of the Achæmenidan kings; that proudest period of Persian empire is passed over without a notice. In its earliest accounts figure personages respecting whom Occidental history is silent; the struggle which constitutes its central point of interest is not that between Asia and Europe for the dominion of the civilized world, but that between Iran and Turan, the Persian and Turkish races, for the possession of the Iranian territory. There was a time when this strange history was a puzzle to the student of Oriental antiquity; when, in the apprehension of some, it cast doubt upon the authenticity of the classic accounts; when attempts were made to analyze it, and extract from it a true historic element. Now the Avesta has solved the riddle; it has shown the mythic origin of many of the personages and events presented as historical, and has exhibited the motives which directed the popular mind in its selection of the circumstances which it retained, and in their combination. It has, then, at least explained the origin of the native traditionary history, and determined what part shall be assigned to it in the reconstruction of the actual history of the race.

The proper office of the Avesta, however, is to inform us respecting the moral and religious tenets and institutions of the ancient Iranian people. And its importance in virtue of this office is not to be lightly estimated. The Zoroastrian religion is one of the most prominent among the forms of belief which have prevailed upon the earth, by reason both of the influence which it has exerted, and

of its own intrinsic character. It was, indeed, never propagated by missionary labors beyond the limits of Iran; we know of no people not of Persian origin who accepted it voluntarily, or upon whom it was forced; but its position on the eastern border of the Semitic races allowed it to affect and modify the various religions of Semitic origin. The later Jewish faith is believed by many to exhibit evident traces of Zoroastrian doctrines, borrowed during the captivity in Babylonia; and the creeds of some Oriental Christian sects, as well as of a portion of the adherents of Islam, have derived essential features from the same source. But the influence which its position only gave it the opportunity of exercising, was assured to it by its own exalted character. Of all the religions of Indo-European origin, of all the religions of the ancient Gentile world, it may fairly be claimed to have been the most noble and worthy of admiration, for the depth of its philosophy, the spirituality of its views and doctrines, and the purity of its morality. Valuable notices respecting it had been given by the classical writers, yet they had been altogether insufficient to convey a clear view even of its then condition in the western provinces to which it had spread, much less to illustrate its origin, and the history of its development in the land of its birth. Had the Avesta no other merit than that of laying before us a full picture of the ancient Persian religion, it would be a document of incalculable value to the student of antiquity.

A brief sketch of the characteristic features of this religion will form a not inappropriate close to a paper on the Avesta.

By the testimony of its own scriptures, the Iranian religion is with the fullest right styled the Zoroastrian: Zoroaster is acknowledged as its founder throughout the whole of the sacred writings; these are hardly more than a record of the revelations claimed to have been made to

him by the supreme divinity. It is not, then, a religion which has grown up in the mind of a whole people, as the expression of their conceptions of things supernatural; it has received its form in the mind of an individual; it has been inculcated and taught by a single sage and thinker. Yet such a religion is not wont to be an entirely new creation, but rather a carrying out of tendencies already existing in the general religious sentiment, a reformation of the old established creed which the times were prepared for and demanded. And so it was in the present instance. We are able, by the aid of the Indian Veda, to trace out with some distinctness the form of the original Aryan faith, held before the separation of the Indian and Persian nations. It was an almost pure nature-religion, a worship of the powers conceived to be the producers of all the various phenomena of the sensible creation;[1] and, of course, a polytheism, as must be the first religion of any people who without higher light are striving to solve for themselves the problem of the universe. But even in the earliest Vedic religion appears a tendency toward an ethical and monotheistic development, evidenced especially by the lofty and ennobling moral attributes and authority ascribed to the god Varuna: and this tendency, afterwards unfortunately checked and rendered inoperative in the Indian branch of the race, seems to have gone on in Persia to an entire transformation of the natural religion into an ethical, of the polytheism into a monotheism; a transformation effected especially by the teachings of the religious reformer Zoroaster. It is far from improbable that Varuna himself is the god out of whom the Iranians made their supreme divinity: the ancient name, however, nowhere appears in their religious records; they have given him a new title, *Ahura-Mazdâ*, 'Spiritual Mighty-one,' or 'Wise-one' (*Aura-Mazda* of the Inscriptions; *Oromasdes* and *Or-*

[1] See above, p. 30 *seq.*

muzd of the classics and modern Persians). The name itself indicates the origin of the conception to which it is given; a popular religion does not so entitle its creations, if indeed it brings forth any of so elevated and spiritual a character. Ahura-Mazdâ is a purely spiritual conception; he is clothed with no external form or human attributes; he is the creator and ruler of the universe, the author of all good; he is the only being to whom the name of a god can with propriety be applied in the Iranian religion. Other beings, of subordinate rank and inferior dignity, are in some measure associated with him in the exercise of his authority; such are Mithra, an ancient sun-god, the almost inseparable companion of Varuna in the Vedic invocations, and the seven Amshaspands (*Amesha-Çpenta*, 'Immortal Holy-ones'), whose identity with the Adityas of the Veda has been conjectured; they appear here, however, with new titles, expressive of moral attributes. The other gods of the original Aryan faith, although they have retained their ancient name of *daeva* (Sanskrit *deva*), have lost their individuality and their dignity, and have been degraded into the demons, the malignant and malevolent spirits, of the new religion; just as, when Christianity was introduced into Germany, the former objects of heathen worship were not at once and altogether set aside and forgotten, but maintained a kind of place in the popular belief as mischievous spirits of evil. The Daevas, together with other classes of beings of like character, form a body of malevolent and harmful powers corresponding to the Indian *rakshas*. At their head, and the chief embodiment of the spirit which inspires them, is *Angra-Mainyus* (*Arimanius*, *Ahriman*), the 'Sinful-minded,' or 'Malevolent;' his name is one given him as an antithesis to the frequent epithet of Ahura-Mazdâ, *çpento-mainyus*, 'holy-minded,' or 'benevolent.' This side of the religion came to receive, however, a peculiar

development, which finally converted the religion itself into a dualism. Such was not its character at the period represented by the Avesta; then the demons were simply the embodiment of whatever evil influences existed in the universe, of all that man has to hate, and fear, and seek protection against. This was the Persian or Zoroastrian solution of the great problem of the origin of evil. There was wickedness, impurity, unhappiness, in the world; but this could not be the work of the holy and benevolent Creator Ahura-Mazdâ; the malevolence of Angra-Mainyus and his infernal legions must have produced it. Later, however, a reasoning and systematizing philosophy inquires: how came there to be such a malevolent being in the fair world of the benevolent Creator? can he have been produced by him? and why, if an inferior and subject power, is he not annihilated, or his power to harm taken away? and then arises the doctrine that the powers of good and evil are independent and equal, ever warring with one another, neither able wholly to subdue its adversary. This latter phase of belief is known to have appeared very early in the history of the Zoroastrian religion; the philosophers aided in its development by setting up an undefined being, *Zervan-akerene*, 'time unbounded,' from which were made to originate the two hostile principles, and for which they sought to find a place among the original tenets of their religion by a misinterpretation of certain passages in the sacred texts.

Such being the constitution of the universe, such the powers by which it was governed, the revelation was made by the benevolent Creator to his chosen servant for the purpose of instructing mankind with reference to their condition, and of teaching them how to aid the good, how to avoid and overcome the evil. The general features of the method by which this end was to be attained are worthy of all praise and approval. It was by sedu-

lously maintaining purity, in thought, word, and deed; by truthfulness, temperance, chastity; by prayer and homage to Ahura-Mazdâ and the other beneficent powers; by the performance of good works, by the destruction of noxious creatures; by everything that could contribute to the welfare and happiness of the human race. No cringing and deprecatory worship of the powers of evil was enjoined; toward them the attitude of the worshipper of Mazdâ was to be one of uncompromising hostility; by the power of a pure and righteous walk he was to confound and frustrate their malevolent attempts against his peace. Fasts and penance, except as imposed by way of penalty for committed trangressions, were unknown. Religious ceremonies were few and simple, for the most part an inheritance from the primitive Aryan time; they were connected chiefly with the offering of *Homa* (Indian *Soma*[1]) and with the fire.[2] The latter was to the ancient Iranians, and has remained down to the present day, the sacred symbol of divinity. An object of worship, properly so called, it never was; it was only invested with the same sanctity which belonged also to the other elements, the pure creations of Ahura-Mazdâ; all were invoked and addressed with homage, and it was unpardonable sin to profane them with impurity. Fire was kept constantly burning in an inclosed space; not in a temple, for idols and temples have been alike unknown throughout the whole course of Persian history: and before it, as in a spot consecrated by the especial presence of the divinity, were performed the chief rites of worship.

The doctrines of the Zoroastrian religion respecting death, and the fate of mankind after death, are a very remarkable and interesting part of it, strikingly exhibiting both its weakness and its strength. On the one hand, as sickness and death were supposed to be the work

[1] See above, p. 10 *seq.* [2] See above, p. 32 *seq.*

of the malignant powers, the dead body itself was regarded with superstitious horror. It had been gotten by the demons into their own peculiar possession, and became a chief medium through which they exercised their defiling action upon the living. Everything that came into its neighborhood was unclean, and to a certain extent exposed to the influences of the malevolent spirits, until purified by the ceremonies which the law prescribed. The corpse was plainly arrayed, and removed as soon as might be from the company of living men: but where should it be deposited? neither of the pure elements, earth, fire, or water, might receive it; so to soil their purity would be a crime; it was exposed in a place prepared for the purpose, and left to be devoured by beasts and birds of prey; and only after the bones had been thoroughly stripped of flesh, and dried and bleached, was it allowed to hide them away in the ground. But while the body was thus dishonored, the different nature and separate destiny of the soul were fully believed in. If the person of whose mortal form the demons had thus obtained possession had been during life a sincere worshipper of Mazdâ, if he had abhorred evil and striven after truth and purity, then the powers of evil had no hold upon his soul; this, after hovering for a time about its former tenement, hoping for a reunion with it, was supposed to pass away beyond the eastern mountains from which the sun rises, to the paradise of the holy and benevolent gods; the souls of the unbelieving and the evil-doers, however, were not deemed worthy of that blessedness, and were thought, so it seems, to be destroyed with the body.

It cannot be said, however, that this belief in immortality, and, to a certain extent, in a future state of rewards and punishments, formed a prominent feature of the Iranian religion, any more than of the Indian, or that it was made to enter into the daily practice of life as an ever-present and powerful incentive to good conduct.

Such are the fundamental doctrines, the moral groundwork, of the Iranian religion as reformed by Zoroaster; and no one can fail to see and acknowledge their noble and exalted character. As laid before us in the Avesta, they are not unmixed, it is true, with much that is of far inferior interest. In order to obtain a view of them thus in their native purity, we have to remove somewhat of the rubbish of ceremonial and outward observance with which they are encumbered and concealed, and to pass over in silence some features of belief not altogether worthy of them, the accretion, in part, of a later time. Yet they are really there, and do in fact constitute the basis on which the whole fabric of Iranian religion and philosophy has been reared. It would seem as if, in the right hands, they might have maintained themselves in their purity and even have led the way to something still better and higher. But this has not been the case. That corruption and decay which has seemed to be the destiny of everything Oriental has not spared the Zoroastrian religion. Its external rites, indeed, have maintained themselves with a tenacity truly remarkable; that little community of strangers on the western Indian coast, now the only remaining adherents of a faith which was in old times professed throughout the whole vast Iranian territory, worship still with the same forms as did their forefathers, three thousand years ago; but the spirit of the ancient religion is lost, and its practices are kept up by the Pârsîs rather from habit and a clannish spirit, than from any real religious sentiment, or proper understanding of the doctrines they symbolize.

VII.

INDO-EUROPEAN PHILOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY.[1]

THE highly important part which the comparative philology of the Indo-European family of languages and the study of Sanskrit have played in the wonderful development of linguistic science, during the past fifty years, is very generally, we may say almost universally, acknowledged. As a matter of fact, the three are clearly seen to have advanced together, progress in the general science depending on and measured by that in its special branch; and the latter, again, being to no small extent determined in its growth by the success of researches into the structure of the ancient language of India. In like manner, the establishment of the Indo-European family itself, with its seven great branches — Indian, Persian, Greek, Latin, Letto-Slavic, Germanic, and Celtic — is commonly regarded as a prime fact in linguistic ethnology, the value of which, both for its own sake and for its bearing upon the relations of language and race through-

[1] 1. *Quæritur. The Sanskrit Language as the Basis of Linguistic Science and the Labors of the German School in that Field — are they not overvalued?* By T. Hewitt Key, M. A., F. R. S., Professor of Comparative Grammar in University College, London. 1863. 8vo. pp. 48. [From *Transactions of the Philological Society* of London; also reprinted in the author's *Philological Essays*, London, 1868.]

2. *L'Aryanisme, et de la trop grande part qu'on a faite à son Influence. Discours de M. Jules Oppert fait à la Bibliothèque Impériale, le* 28 *Déc.* 1865, *pour l'Ouverture de son Cours de Sanscrit.* [Pp. 50–68 of the number for January, 1866, of the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne.* Paris. 8vo.]

out the world, is not to be denied nor readily to be over-estimated.

All this, however, has from the beginning found its gainsayers, and finds them still. There are always conservative spirits who are slow to take in new truths, or truths from new sources. The change of ground and of point of view which philological science has undergone during its later history amounts almost to a revolution, and naturally provokes the opposition of ancient opinion and of the prejudices engendered by it. Moreover, such opposition never fails to find legitimate matter for its attacks. New views and methods are pretty sure to be pushed at some points further than they can fairly bear, even by those who are, upon the whole, best qualified to assert and wield them; and yet more, by those who fall in with the current of a novel movement, in full sympathy with its innovating spirit, but lacking something of the sound learning and critical judgment which should make them its real helpers. In general, such a state of things may safely be left to work out its own result; the truth will appear in the end, and will be the more clearly brought forth if the efforts of its seekers be sharply criticised and questioned during the search. Yet it may be worth while sometimes to stand deliberately on the defensive, exposing the misapprehensions and unfounded assumptions of the critics and questioners. And the two papers whose titles we have given above are especially worthy of such treatment, because of the position of their writers, as professors of comparative philology and of Sanskrit respectively, and men whose names are favorably known to philologists all over the world; because they have been made by these men the introductions to their courses of lectures, as containing considerations especially needing to be brought to the attention of students at the present time; and because they may be taken as types of two classes of objections

which have a more or less general currency, and ought, if ill founded, to be removed.

A few words as to the nature of the relation of interdependence between the three branches of philological inquiry to which we have referred will be first in place.

When it is claimed that the science of language is mainly founded upon Indo-European comparative philology, this must not be understood as at all limiting the attention of the science to the languages of that family. The aim of linguistics is to comprehend language, in the largest and most unrestricted sense — the whole body of human speech, in all its manifestations and all its relations, in all its known varieties, with their history and the reasons of their discordance. The study would be as truly incomplete, its views partial and its results one-sided, if the rudest and most insignificant of the families of speech were suffered to escape its notice, as if it overlooked the higher. Only a small part of the material which the scholar would wish to command lies, at the best, within his reach, and of this part he cannot afford to neglect anything. If he is to understand the beginnings and the historical development of all the forms of human language, and to trace out the inner conditions and outer circumstances which have made them what they are, he needs to have access to authentic records of every part and period of them all; while, in point of fact, only the later phases of a few among them, only the very latest of most of them, are placed before his view. His conclusions, then, have to be won by inference, from the careful study and comparison of more or less disconnected fragments. And it was evidently necessary to establish somehow a method in which this fragmentary material should be treated, to derive canons and principles of linguistic reasoning and interpretation of evidence, to lay down the general outlines of linguistic history, which should be confirmed or changed by further research.

Now how should this be accomplished, except through means of the special study of the Indo-European family? Here alone was there an almost illimitable body of related facts, with traceable ties running through and connecting them all together; here alone was offered an exceeding variety of highly developed structure, along with the possibility of following back the course of its development to a condition of primitive simplicity. There are elsewhere records of human speech of about the same age as the oldest Indo-European, or even perhaps older; but they are in every case accompanied with conditions which render them vastly less valuable to the linguistic scholar. Egyptian written words have come to us from a remoter time than any other; but the Egyptian is a language standing almost alone, and of a structure so exceedingly simple that it can scarcely be said to have a history. In this latter respect it is even surpassed by the Chinese, which also belongs to a class so exceptional that it can cast light upon only the scantiest portion of the general development of speech. The Semitic is the sole remaining rival in antiquity to the Indo-European; and the Semitic, too, is in variety and wealth of linguistic illustration greatly its inferior: the Semitic languages are a little knot, as it were, of sister dialects, sharing together a highly peculiar primitive development, the explanation of which seems as unattainable, and is certainly as difficult, as anything in the whole range of linguistic problems, and whose effect has been to give them a rigidity and persistence cutting off the possibility of free and varied growth. It was only among the idioms, then, of Indo-European kindred, that any extended reach of linguistic history was exhibited in a connected and apprehensible manner. Here could be followed all the processes of growth, in their manifold workings, from the germs of speech up to the highest type of perfected language anywhere known. Here could be formed a nucleus,

around which a whole science should later shape itself. Here could be drawn out those generalizations, here elaborated those modes of research, which might be applied in dealing with families of language presenting yet scantier and more difficult materials. Applied, indeed, not without various modifications: it was unavoidable that not a few principles should be set up and regarded as universal upon the authority of this family, which a wider induction would overthrow, or show to be of only limited scope; that many an observer should have his eye so filled with Indo-European phenomena that he would see them, and them only, in whatever direction he looked; yet practice in Indo-European philology could not but give, upon the whole, a much fuller training and more many-sided knowledge of language than was to be won in any other way.

There is, then, no undue exaltation of the merits of Indo-European language, no reprehensible partiality for the tongues of our own kindred, involved in the claim that upon their study mainly reposes hitherto the whole science of language. That the labors of linguistic students have been to so great an extent engrossed by them is owing in part to the causes already explained, in part to the historical importance of the races speaking these tongues, and in part to the superiority of the tongues themselves and of the literatures which represent them. Nothing forbids the linguist, any more than the student in any other department, to dwell most upon those parts of his theme which are richest in instruction, and invested with the most interesting associations. Here, again, there is doubtless danger that some inquirers will have their views narrowed by too exclusive attention to one portion of the field, and will be led to depreciate and neglect other portions; but such will be proper subjects of individual criticism; their errors can bring no discredit upon the general method of the science.

Hardly less fruitful for Indo-European philology than the latter for the whole science of language was the study of Sanskrit. There has been a like historical connection and dependence in the one case as in the other. Its ground, too, has been of the same character, consisting in the superior facility afforded by this language for attaining desirable truth. The discovery of Sanskrit made an era in linguistic study; it afforded the needed organizing force among materials which were already rapidly gathering, but which the collectors did not yet know rightly how to dispose of. This it accomplished simply in virtue of its character as the oldest and the best preserved of all the Indo-European tongues. It occupies among them a position analogous with that of the ancient Mœso-Gothic among the Germanic dialects, only more advanced and prominent. It exhibits the phonetic structure, the elements, radical and formative, with their meanings and modes of combination, once belonging to the whole family, in a notably more unchanged condition than does any one of the other branches. It has, indeed, many peculiarities of its own, which are just as much local, and not Indo-European, as the peculiarities of the other branches are; its authority is by no means paramount; there is not one of its sister-dialects whom it does not fall behind in one or another point, or in many; and yet, when all due allowances have been made, it is still the main support of Indo-European philology; it guides our researches back into periods of the history of our common language which would else have been beyond our ken; it has yielded a host of results otherwise unattainable, and imparted a fullness and certainty to the principles of the science which nothing besides could have given.

But it is wholly in the nature of things that the uses of such an auxiliary should have been often pushed beyond their true scope by incautious inquirers. The temptation is well-nigh irresistible to set up unduly as

an infallible norm a language which casts so much light and explains so many difficulties; to exaggerate all its merits and overlook its defects; to defer to its authority in cases where it does not apply; to accept as of universal value its features of local and special growth; to treat it, in short, as if it were the mother of the Indo-European dialects, instead of the eldest sister in the family. The belief that it is actually their mother, the tendency to trace back to India, as ultimate home, the various tongues, beliefs, institutions, and myths of all the Indo-European races, has been somewhat prevalent, not only through the general public, but even among the learned; —generally, of course, the more prevalent, the less the degree of learning, yet also infecting scholars of high rank, insidiously showing itself here and there in their work, and requiring ever to be strictly guarded against, in general and in particular. And, also naturally enough, the exhibition and effects of this disposition have tended to bring about a reaction, and to provoke the distrust and repugnance of other scholars, who were acute enough to perceive that the language was improperly employed, but not sufficiently well-informed to be able to exercise an independent judgment, separating the bad from the good, distinguishing between the merits of the method and the errors of its application.

The first of the two papers we have undertaken to review is a fair representative of this reactionary movement. It is written in no unbecoming tone or style, and has the appearance of being a sincere inquiry on the part of an earnest student, who has been repelled by what he deems errors and absurdities on the part of some among the most prominent authorities in the modern school of comparative philology, and driven into a state of skepticism touching the value of the methods pursued by the school, particularly the use it makes of the Sanskrit language. The author, indeed, writes in such entire

good faith, that he gives at the outset what we cannot but regard as the key to his whole state of mind, by acknowledging that he does not know Sanskrit. The confession is more creditable to his candor than to his character as a thorough and comprehensive scholar. For the professed teacher of comparative philology, of the comparative philology of the Indo-European languages, in this age, to omit the Sanskrit from his list of acquisitions preparatory or auxiliary to his work, is, to say the least, not commendable. What should we think of a Germanic scholar who had neglected to master the Mœso-Gothic? It makes no difference whether or not the importance of the language in question has been exaggerated by some of those who employ it; it is at any rate a very ancient Indo-European tongue, standing in such remarkable relations to the rest of the family as absolutely to require to be made a prominent factor in their joint and comparative treatment. What if it be sometimes, or often, abused? what if its value be only half or a quarter of what is claimed on its behalf? So much the more need that one who makes linguistic science the business of his life should put himself in a position to point out the abuses, and disprove the false claims. The world has a right to expect of him that he will give it positive enlightenment upon such matters, not that he will (p. 3) "enter into a contest for which he is confessedly so ill-equipped," merely as a mouth-piece to express the suspicions of others who, "like himself, are wholly wanting in the special qualification, a knowledge of Sanskrit." We wonder a little that, on finding himself in such company, he was not led, rather than write himself and them out in the way he has, to try what would be the effect of removing in his own case the special disqualification under which they all alike were laboring. We presume that, if he had taken the trouble to follow such a course, either the article which we are considering would never have

seen the light, or its scope would have been greatly changed. He might have retained all, or nearly all, the opinions he now holds as to the points to which his exceptions are taken; yet he would have put them forward, not as reproaches against the general method of modern philology, but as faults of detail, errors of individuals, which needed to be set aside in order that the method might work out its true results. No authority, not even the highest, is infallible; and in a young and growing science, such as is linguistics at present, the most cautious constructors cannot well avoid building much which will require to be torn down and cleared away, or built over; but little attention will be likely to be paid to the destructive efforts of those who begin by acknowledging that they have omitted to master some of the fundamental rules of the art.

It is not quite ingenuous of Professor Key that, after declaring (p. 3) that he "does not propose to enter into the domain of Sanskrit history and chronology, a task for which he is wholly unfitted," he nevertheless proceeds to discourse upon it for several pages, in order (p. 7) "to show the unsatisfactory condition of the chronology of Sanskrit literature." This has too much the look of an attempt to cast discredit upon one department of the value of the language, in the hope that something of it will also cleave to another and a wholly independent department. The age of the Sanskrit literature has nothing more to do with the value of the language as a document illustrating the history of Indo-European speech, than has the age of the Arabic literature with the position of the Arabic among Semitic dialects. The Sanskrit would still stand at the head of Indo-European tongues; it would be worth to the comparative philologist nearly what it is now worth, though it were of the lowest age that any skeptic has yet ventured to suggest, and though we possessed no

literature of it save a grammar and a vocabulary, or a version of some Christian book, as is the case with the Mœso-Gothic. We do not care, then, to enter into an examination of what our author says in this his parenthetical and unintended introduction.

The bulk of the paper besides is made up of detailed criticisms on the etymologies of words and forms given by two prominent authorities in comparative philology, Bopp and Max Müller. Professor Key appears to think that whatever accusations can be made to lie against these two, or either of them, will attach to the whole cause they represent, to the German school of philology and the Sanskrit language. To this, however, we demur, both for the general reasons given above and for other particular ones. The déserts of Professor Bopp toward comparative philology are of the most brilliant, and at the same time of the most substantial, character. It has rarely been the fortune of a single man so to lay the foundation, establish the principal methods, and gain many of the most valuable results, of a branch of study of such wide reach and great importance. But he is nevertheless a man to whose activity there are very distinct and somewhat narrow limits. He is a remarkable instance of one who is a great comparative philologist, without being either a great linguistic scholar or a profound and philosophical linguist. He knows but few languages, as compared with many another scholar of the present day, nor are we aware that he is deeply and thoroughly versed in any, so as to hold a distinguished place among its students — in the Sanskrit itself, certainly, he was long ago left behind by the great body of its special votaries. And of a science of language, as distinct from and developed out of comparative philology, in its relations to human nature and human history, he can scarcely be said to have a conception. Hence, although his mode of working is wonderfully genial, his

vision of rare acuteness, and his instinct a generally trustworthy guide, he is liable to wander far from the safe track, and has done not a little labor over which a broad and heavy mantle of charity needs to be drawn. The progress of the science has been for some time past in no manner bound up with his investigations, and his opinion upon a difficult and controverted point would carry far less weight of authority than that of many another scholar whose name could not, upon the whole, bear even a distant comparison with his. In a considerable portion of the criticisms which Professor Key makes upon his works, the majority of comparative philologists, we believe, of the German or any other school, would be free to join, yet without abating a jot of the admiration and gratitude which they pay to the founder of their science.

As regards our author's other antagonist, Professor Max Müller, it is perhaps only in England that modern philology is looked upon as so identified with his name that a blot on the one will be presumed to sully the other. The learning and acuteness of this author, his power of ingenious and interesting illustration, no one will think of questioning; but for strictness of method, for consistency of views, for logical force and insight, he is much less distinguished; and he is sometimes carried away by a teeming fancy out of the region of sober investigation, or permits himself to be satisfied with hypotheses, and reasons for them, that have only a subjective value. A notable exemplification of his characteristic weaknesses is offered in his theory of phonetic types, instinctively produced as the beginnings of human speech; a theory which forms one of the principal counts of Professor Key's indictment, and which we should not think of defending in a single point from the latter's hostile criticism. Rarely is a great subject more trivially and insufficiently treated than is that of the origin

of language by Müller in the last lecture of his first series.[1]

To go through all the points made by Professor Key, examining their grounds, and refuting or accepting them, would take much more time and space than we can afford, and we must limit ourselves to a few examples. In two respects, especially, his objections are to be regarded as valuable protests, requiring to be well heeded, against modes of etymologizing which are too common among Sanskritists: namely, the over-ready reference to a Sanskrit root, of doubtful authenticity and wide and ill-defined meaning, of derivatives in the various Indo-European languages; and the over-easy persuasion that the genesis of a suffix is sufficiently explained when it is pronounced "of pronominal origin."

As regards the former point, we think our author entirely justified in casting ridicule upon the facile derivation of words meaning 'water,' 'earth,' 'cow,' and the like, from alleged Sanskrit roots claimed to signify 'go.' This is in no small part an importation into modern philology of the work of the Indian grammarians, the influence of whose artificial construction of roots and derivatives to fit one another, and of their general method of acute empiricism without sound philosophy, has not yet died out, though, as we hope, it is rapidly waning. The body of Sanskrit roots, in its shape as left by them, is a very heterogeneous collection, and not a little dangerous to handle for a person with only a moderate degree of learning in the language; a vast deal of worthless etymologizing has been done and is still doing upon them. A greater service could hardly be rendered to Indo-European philology than by thoroughly sifting the mass, separating the ancient from the modern and secondary, and the genuine from the spurious, and explain-

[1] Müller has later withdrawn his assent from the only positive theory of origin put forward in that lecture: see below, p. 268 *seq.*

ing the origin and accounting for the presence of the latter classes. It is the fault of the grammarians referred to, that so many of the roots have the meaning 'go' attributed to them, as a kind of indefinite sense enabling them to stand as etymons of almost any given word which may be conveniently referred to them, regard being had to the form alone: of such roots, a part cannot be made to bear the sense by any fair method of interpretation; others contain it in the same way as it is contained in the Latin *vadere*, *ambulare*, *festinare*, *progredi*, *verti*, and the like. The etymologies which Professor Key cites in justification of his criticisms are of varied character; the smallest portion are sound, and defensible against his attack; others are mere conjectures, more or less wanting in plausibility, and wholly unfit to be put forward with confidence; the rest are palpably false, involving unreal roots or unreal meanings.

As regards, again, the use of pronominal elements in explaining the genesis of grammatical forms, we deem Professor Key's interpellations not less in place. The personal forms of verbs, and other parts of the verbal conjugation, were found to be so simply and beautifully accounted for by such elements, that men were naturally led to lay down the principle, "The verbal or predicative root gives the main idea, the pronominal defines its relations," and then to make an easy matter of tracing the endings of derivation and of declension to pronominal sources. But, as Professor Key points out, there is a vastly greater logical difficulty in the latter case, which is not to be passed over so lightly. Perhaps it may be found removable, but it certainly ought not to be ignored. We know well, from the reliable results of linguistic research, that the transfers of meaning through which elements originally independent are passed on their way to the condition of affixes are often distant and violent, such as we should never have guessed, and might have been in-

clined to pronounce impossible. We are willing, therefore, to allow it to be altogether probable that pronominal roots have played some part, perhaps a main part, in the production of the elements here in question. But how far, and how, is a matter of exceeding obscurity, which has hardly even begun to be cleared up. In order to its elucidation, we need a much wider and more penetrating investigation than any one has yet undertaken of the declensional and derivative apparatus belonging to languages of a simpler structure, or structureless. And meanwhile no one is to be blamed for feeling a kind of indignant impatience at seeing this and that ending complacently referred to such and such a pronominal root, as if no further explanation of it were necessary to satisfy any reasonable person.

When, however, Professor Key is led to question the existence of pronominal roots as a separate class altogether, he carries his skepticism further than we can follow him. To our apprehension, the fact that there were such roots, constituting a distinct body and bearing a different office from verbal roots, preceding in time the development of the grammatical system, and playing a highly important part therein, is too clearly read in the results of linguistic investigation to admit of question. Whether in the absolute beginning they were of another origin than verbal roots, we do not care at present categorically to decide; so recondite and difficult a point may well enough be left for the next generation of scholars to settle. We know of no attempt to identify the two classes, or to derive the one from the other, which is to be deemed in any measure successful. The one our author makes is not less a failure than those of his predecessors. He asserts, namely, that a demonstrative root is but the natural conversion of an imperative verb, meaning 'look! see!' or the like, the utterance of which accompanied a pointing out of the object intended with the finger. And

he gives us as an example the English root *ken* or *con*, which he claims to have traced through all the heterogeneous and disconnected tongues of Europe, Asia, and the Pacific Islands, in the sense of 'see' or 'know,' and which he regards as a satisfactory etymon for the demonstrative pronouns of all these languages. We cannot accept any part of this as a good philological process, either the establishment of the verbal root, or the recognition of the demonstrative, or the identification of the two, or the ground upon which this is founded. It all savors of the old helter-skelter method of etymologizing, which it was the main merit of Bopp and his school to have overthrown. If there is any one principle to whose establishment more than another's we have to attribute the reformation wrought by the school, it is this — that strict regard is to be had to the demonstrated affinities of the languages whose material is compared and identified. The modern linguist keeps before his mind a distinct idea of what is implied in the historical correspondences of two tongues — namely, the receipt of common linguistic material, common words and forms, by common descent from the same original language; that community of descent is to be proved, not by sporadic items of superficial resemblance, which may well enough be accidental, but by sufficiently pervading correspondence of material or of structure, or of both; and that one language must not be used to cast light upon the history of another, unless the two have been shown to be — or at least have not been shown not to be — of the same kindred. Professor Key, in the inquiry we are criticising, takes a part of his material, with approbation, from what is probably the very worst work Bopp ever did in his life, his attempt to prove the Malay-Polynesian tongues akin with the Indo-European. But, even here, Bopp really attempted to prove the relationship, by a searching and comprehensive investigation, and would never have thought of paralleling Poly-

aesian roots or words with Indo-European until after such an investigation; while Professor Key, so far as we can see, is ready to take whatever he can find, there or elsewhere, without scruple of any kind. This method, or lack of method, is a simple reversal of the progress which etymologic science has made during the past fifty years; it is an error compared with which all that he alleges against Bopp and the German school quite disappears from sight. We are sorry to say that it is shared by more than one other English scholar of note. Philologists who bring in Chinese and New Zealand and Finnish analogues to explain Indo-European words are thoroughly unsound, and need to reform their science from the foundation.

Our author's views in phonetics are not less unsatisfactory to us than his etymological principles. His regarding (p. 20) an inspection and study of the *chordæ vocales*, or (we may perhaps generalize it by saying) an intimate knowledge of the hidden physical apparatus by which articulate sounds are produced, as "the proper basis of the study of oral language," seems about as serious a misapprehension as it were possible to make. As well assert that the study of composition for the piano is founded upon a comprehension of the delicate muscular anatomy of the hand and arm, and of the construction of pianofortes. Precisely what are the acoustic properties of articulate sounds, and precisely how they are generated, is doubtless a matter of great interest to the philologist, and he should receive with gratitude all the light which the physicist and physiologist may cast upon it; but it is a part of physics and physiology rather than of philology. Articulate sounds, on the one hand, are only a part of the substance of language; and, on the other hand, they are not physical products, but voluntary productions — as much so as gestures with arm and hand are; they are learned and imitated by repeated experiment upon the capabilities of the organs of utterance, of whose intimate

structure and action the experimenter knows nothing. Such knowledge, carried beyond a certain point, does not aid appreciably our understanding even of the phonetic transitions of language; for habit comes in as a more powerful determining force than the niceties of physical organization. Again, Professor Key overrates not a little the absolute value of Willis's interesting experiments on the artificial production of vowel-sounds; that the latter was able to imitate them after a fashion by using different lengths of tube no more proves that "the character of any vowel depends almost wholly on the distance for the time between the *chordæ vocales* and the margin of the lips, in other words on the length of the vocal pipe, the position of the tongue being of no moment so long as it does not close the passage of air" (p. 20), than does the possibility of producing tones of different pitch by pipes of greater or less length prove that the variation of pitch in vocal sounds is brought about in that way. The suggestion (p. 19) that Bopp regards *a*, *i*, *u* (sounded as in Italian) as the original vowels because they alone have independent representatives in the Sanskrit alphabet, is wrong in every particular. If our author had understood better the theory of the syllable, and the relation of vowel and consonant, he would never have made an attempt to account for the Sanskrit "vowels" *r* and *l* in a manner so lacking in every element of plausibility (p. 21). Whether it is a whim or a false theory that makes him write of "*asperates*" (p. 22 *seq.*) instead of *aspirates*, or whether the fault is simply the printer's, we are somewhat puzzled to determine. And, coming from phonetic theory to phonetic fact, we are not a little astonished at finding him (p. 40) on the hunt after a remote etymological reason for the prefixed *e* of the French *étais*, *établir*, as if it were anything different from that of *étude*, *épais*, *esprit*, and the host of other words like them; and, again, at his paralleling (p. 37), in the face and eyes of

"Grimm's law," our *through* and German *durch* with Greek *θύρα*, German *thür*, our *door*.

We pass unnoticed a number of other points, in which our author lays himself open to criticism not less severe than that which he deals out to the representatives of the German school, and merely add, in answer to his main inquiry, "whether the labors of that school are not overvalued," that, in fact, the merits of any school which is active and successful in the discovery of new truth can hardly avoid being both overvalued and undervalued, and that this one doubtless constitutes no exception to the general rule: that its labors are overvalued by those who assume that the etymologizings of even its leaders are to be accepted on authority, in all their details, without free and careful criticism; and undervalued by those who, on account of faults of detail, reject the whole method, lacking the sound learning and enlightened judgment which should lead them to adopt it wherever it is truly valuable. And we fear that our author is to be ranked in the latter class. The German school has its defects; but, at the same time, its influence is far from being yet so wide-spread and commanding as were to be desired; and no anti-German school can find any ground to stand upon.[1]

We come now to consider the other article, which, both for its character and contents and on account of the very prominent position in the community of philological scholars held by its author, demands at our hands a still more careful and detailed examination. M. Oppert is especially known all over the world as a student of the Assyrian cuneiform monuments. Among the few who have occupied themselves with this difficult subject, no one has seemed to approach it with more thorough train-

[1] Professor Key's comments on the above criticism, and his reply to some of the points made in it, may be read in the Postscript to his *Philological Essays* (p. 310 *seq.*).

ing and fuller preparation than he, or to conduct his investigations by more approved methods; and, among the learned of the continent of Europe, his views carry a weight superior to those of any other person. Moreover, he holds the position of professor of Sanskrit in the school of Oriental Languages attached to the great Paris library, and therefore appears to speak *ex cathedra* upon whatever concerns that language and its bearings. Hence, if he advances opinions at variance with what has usually been taken hitherto for sound philology, it is needful that they be not passed over in silence.

The object of M. Oppert's paper, unlike that of Professor Key's, is in a much higher degree ethnological than philological. He has no complaint to urge against the Boppian school of comparative grammar, as such; he speaks in the most approving, even complimentary, terms of its founder, of whom he is proud to own (p. 54) that he has been "personally the pupil;" he is willing to allow, as a harmless or laudable exercise of acuteness, the comparison of form with form, and of dialect with dialect, so long as the comparer confines himself strictly to such work, and never looks beyond to inquire what all this proves. Nay, he will go so far as to allow that certain petty notions, to which we need not theoretically deny any degree of importance at all, are capable of being derived from the study of language. He has himself, he says (p. 53), furnished an example of what can be done for history in this way, by pointing out that the form of the Greek word ὄριζα, 'rice,' demonstrates that rice came to Europe from India, not directly, but by way of Persia. M. Pictet's very lively and suggestive, but very unsafe, work on "Indo-European Origins" is to him, in respect both to wideness of limit and sureness of result, the *ne plus ultra* of what philology can accomplish toward gathering "curious, or rather piquant" items of information as to the knowledge and possessions of the "Ar-

yans, *soi-disant* primitive:" but there lies nothing of consequence behind these facts; no historical, no ethnological truths of wider range may be arrived at by inference from them; to conclude that there exists a tie of relationship between the peoples whose tongues are so nearly related is worse than inadmissible, it is palpably absurd. What M. Oppert proposes in explanation of the connection of languages we will presently inquire, after first seeing how he apprehends the scope of linguistic study.

At the very outset of his article, he is guilty of a totally incorrect statement of what is claimed on behalf of this branch of science by its students and advocates. It pretends, he says (p. 50), to "retrace with a sure hand the effaced pages of history, and to supply the place of missing documents, even previous to the remote period of the Pharaohs, whose monuments seem to defy eternity" (if any one can tell what that means). Now no one, surely, who is worthy of M. Oppert's attention for a moment, thinks at the present day of setting up any such unfounded claim. Linguistic science is simply one, though one of the most fruitful, of the means whereby we win hints and fragments of knowledge respecting times and peoples of which we learn nothing from other sources, or whereby we check and supplement the defective information we receive from other sources. No method of historical inquiry stands alone, nor will they all together, it is likely, do more than most imperfectly and unsatisfactorily accomplish the task which it is here asserted that linguistic science proposes to achieve unaided. How fragmentary must be, at the best, our reconstruction of the immeasurable fabric of past human history, is a truth which is coming to be felt more and more every year, and which the profoundest scholars most fully realize. To take the random assertions of superficial dreamers for the present attitude of a whole class of

students may be very convenient for him who wishes to depreciate their study, but it is very discreditable either to his ingenuousness or to his understanding of the real aspect of the science. When, then, M. Oppert winds up one of the early chapters of his essay (p. 57) with this bodeful sentence, "Let us not forget the fact which many *savants* acknowledge to themselves, but which no one dares confess aloud, that comparative philology, in the narrow form in which it has had to be created in order to prove fruitful, cannot be the science of the future"! he simply exposes himself in the somewhat ridiculous attitude of one who knocks down, with gestures of awe and affright, a tremendous man of straw of his own erecting.

Next, like Professor Key, M. Oppert falls mercilessly upon the unfortunate Sanskrit literature; not, indeed, in order to prove its modern date, but for the purpose of showing up the exaggerations of which its literary and scientific value has been the subject. In much that he urges, there is a certain kind and degree of justice, but the use he attempts to make of it is unjustifiable. Fifty years and more ago, when this literature was first brought to our knowledge, the attitude of the public mind was very different from what it is now. Men were still possessed with the notion that somewhere in the East, and somewhere in the past, there was an immense deposit of primeval wisdom, of which at least the scattered fragments might be recovered for our enlightenment. And India was one of the regions to which all eyes were turned with especial expectation and longing. When, therefore, the Sanskrit literature, of such evident antiquity, and containing so much that was engaging and valuable, made its appearance, the disposition to overestimate it was altogether natural; and some of its enthusiastic admirers extolled it as being grander and nobler than aught the world knew beside. The echoes

of those ill-considered praises are still heard, it is true, in the opinions of certain persons, who get their learning and judgment at second hand; and there may possibly be here and there even an independent scholar, of a very peculiar turn of mind, who rates the Mahâbhârata above the Iliad, and Jaimini and Kanâda above Pythagoras and Plato; but the generality of students of literature have long since abandoned such errors. Juster views of the legacies from primitive times, and of the endowments and achievements of various races, are prevalent; we do not look further back than to Greece for the first full development of true art and science and philosophy, nor expect from other quarters aught but the records of men's imperfect attempts at the realization of those highest ideals of human endeavor. And to this desirable result the study of Indian literature and language has in no small part contributed. It has helped to teach us that the literary productions of different races are to be examined as documents illustrating the history of each race, and so, along with it, that of all humanity, which cannot be understood in its totality, nor in any of its portions, without the concurrence of all. This whole kind of value appears to escape the notice of our author; if a body of works is not going to teach us how to think and reason better, or to furnish us new and superior models of taste, it is of no account in his eyes. That the hymns of the Veda are inferior as poetical productions to the Psalms of David, and cannot hope ever to displace the latter in our affections and daily use, constitutes in his eyes their condemnation. We, on the other hand, would maintain it as the grand merit of the Vedic poetry, that, like the language in which it is written, it opens to us views of a period in Indo-European history which careful comparison and induction show us to be of remarkable antiquity and primitiveness; which are therefore calculated to modify — and have, in fact, already

powerfully modified — our ideas of primitive times and conditions in general.

It would not be easy to discover, without aid, the connection between exaggeration, on the one hand, of the value of Sanskrit literature, and, on the other hand, of the ethnological worth of conclusions drawn from Indo-European philology; nor are we quite sure that we see it, even when pointed out by M. Oppert. Inferences from the material and structure of a language are not less independent of the literary rank of the works in which that language is preserved to us, than of their date. It appears, however, that, in our author's opinion, one sort of exaggeration has, by a natural contagion, founded in the perversity of human nature, led to another; that the Indianists, inflamed with false fancies, and casting about to see how and where they could depart most widely and wildly from the soberness of truth, have imagined those crazy theories respecting an Indo-European race as speakers of Indo-European tongues, which, as we shall presently see, he looks upon as their chief offense.

But he is able to bring forward yet another reason to account for their aberrations. These are in part a new and striking illustration of the well-known principle that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." It is because the proper work of comparative philology is already pretty thoroughly done up, that the perplexed students of it, sighing for other worlds to conquer, have launched out into departments, and begun drawing conclusions, with which they had no business to meddle. Bopp's "Comparative Grammar" has not only the honor of being the brilliant initiator and model of a new science; it has also exhausted the field of study. Hear M. Oppert (p. 55): "The work of Bopp is so complete in itself, it has so exhausted all the resources of the branch of learning which it has contributed to create, that after it the science will make no further progress worth noting." Again

(p. 56): "This feeling which impressed itself upon the disciples of M. Bopp, this conviction that grammatical investigation had arrived at its extreme limit, urged them to extend unduly the frame which the prudent master had been careful not to transcend." And more of the same sort, which we forbear to quote. Of all M. Oppert's erroneous assumptions respecting linguistic science, this is perhaps the one which will be received with most derisive incredulity by the workers in that science, the one which will render it most definitively impossible that he should ever again claim to be included in their number. We see here the "personal pupil" exalting beyond all measure, for his own private ends, the merit of his master's work, and refusing to believe that there can be any progress beyond the point at which he himself has dropped the study, to turn his attention to others. What is actually to be held concerning Bopp's achievements has been pointed out above, when noticing Professor Key's very different opinion of them. Not a single department, even of Indo-European philology, can be mentioned, in which there does not remain an infinite amount of labor to be done, in rectifying Bopp's errors, and in extending and perfecting his researches; and that not only in detail, but also in general features and grand outlines. It is not, for example, yet determined, to anything like general satisfaction, which of the great branches of the family are most nearly related to one another. One authority puts forward the Greek, another the German, another the Slavonic, as of closest kindred with the Indo-Persian or Aryan branch; one scholar of the highest rank asserts the Celtic to be the very nearest cousin of the Latin, nearer than even the Greek; while the more common opinion makes it a wholly independent division, and the first of all to separate from the common stock. And of the genesis of the primitive forms, common to the whole family, and of the special developments of vocabulary, uttered form, and meaning,

which the several branches exhibit, hardly more than sufficient is known to whet the appetite for more complete knowledge; enough results yet remain to be wrought out to occupy generations of acute and devoted investigators. But, even supposing it all already accomplished by Bopp and his personal pupil Oppert, there are a host of other families whose languages are waiting for a like treatment; and only when they have received it, and when the results they yield have been combined with one another, filling out our view of each special family, and of the totality of human speech, will linguistic scholars be at liberty to shelve their grammars and dictionaries, and take to fancy-work for lack of more legitimate occupation.

M. Oppert refers with strong disapprobation to the attempts which have been made to introduce some of the fruits of comparative philology into the systems of instruction of the young in Latin and Greek. With remarkable closeness of logical reasoning, he declares (p. 57): "I can think of nothing more disastrous to science, in the point of view of pure science, *for* the desire would be to introduce notions which are often far enough from being incontestable, and, in the instruction of youth, innovation is to be avoided." And he goes on to point out that the rising generation has a hard enough time of it already with its classical tasks; and that to crowd in modern philology would be a cruel addition to them. Finally, nothing would be gained by it; for (p. 58) "all the living forces of comparative philology would be impotent to render easier the understanding of authors, or to cast new light upon any point whatever of classical antiquity." There would be more ground for this objection, if the only end of learning Latin and Greek were that one be able to make a glib translation of classical authors, and explain their archæological and geographical allusions. But, in implying this, M. Oppert takes as low a view of classical

philology as he takes elsewhere of comparative philology. A Latin grammar, for example, certainly ought not to be a mere instrumentality by means of which the greatest number of empirical facts may be beaten into a boy in the shortest time; it should aim to be a true presentation of the structure of the language, with as much account of the reasons underlying the facts it teaches as shall interest and enlighten the learner, and make them more apprehensible and retainable by him. M. Oppert does not at all contemplate the possibility that the better comprehension of grammatical facts and their relations which comparative philology brings may be made of service in recasting their systematic arrangement, and lightening the load of solid memorizing which the young scholar has necessarily to bear. The effort which he seeks to discourage is mainly made in this direction. As for the general truths of linguistic science, they are doubtless in the main beyond the reach of the boy at school—as, indeed, some minds are impenetrable to them even at a later stage of education: there are those into whom we may fairly wish it had been possible to flog them in the earlier and more impressible period of life; who might, in that case, exhibit a better present understanding of their character and bearing. But it is not true that the new scientific philology does not aid the comprehension of authors and of antiquities in the classic tongues. It performs the same office in them as in the more recent languages; and M. Oppert might just as properly sneer at those French and German scholars who encourage a profound historic study of their native languages as a means of keener and more exact appreciation of the beauties of their literatures, and of the thought and culture and institutions there represented.

It is impossible, however, to do justice to the incoherence and aimlessness of our author's reasonings in this part of his essay, without quoting and commenting them at greater length than we can afford.

What M. Oppert most strenuously demands of comparative philology is, as already mentioned, that it should not venture to draw any ethnological conclusions from its grammatical and lexical data. He extols Bopp (p. 55) for his "absolute grammaticalism," in that he talks always of dialects and their relations, never once referring to peoples and their connections and mutual influences. Now it is, indeed, to the credit of the author of a "comparative grammar," that he keeps himself in that work strictly within the limits of his subject; but whether we should not have a higher opinion of the *savant*, and put a fuller faith in the results of his researches, if he showed more often that he appreciated their ultimate foundation and wider bearings, may well be made a question.

If our author will not allow the etymologists to ethnologize, so neither will he admit that peculiar mental and moral characteristics constitute an evidence of ethnic unity. That traces of an "Aryan spirit" are to be discovered among the races of Europe he denies, as also that monotheism or any other *ism* is the peculiar appanage of the Semitic mind. We find no signs, moreover, of his putting any higher confidence in physical characteristics; at least, he only once refers to them, and then (p. 54) for the purpose of denying that there is any physical difference between "Aryans" and Semites, and that they can have been subjected to different climatic or territorial influences.

All this being so, we might fairly expect to find him a general skeptic with regard to ethnological connections, holding that nothing is or can be definitely learned respecting the migrations, the superpositions, the ejections, the mixtures of races which have laid the foundation of the grand communities now known to us. To our surprise, however, we find the truth to be quite the contrary of this. The most confident linguistic ethnologist, the most positive physicist, and the most daring ethnic moralist, if rolled into one, could hardly claim to know so much

and so certainly of the history of races as does Professor Jules Oppert. That whole demolition of unfounded conclusions of which we have been witnesses was meant simply to clear the ground for the erection of his own magnificent edifice of absolute truth — truth, as we must suppose, elaborated out of the depths of his own consciousness, or revealed through some spirit medium; for, on the one hand, he seems to have left himself no other sources than these to draw from; and, on the other hand, the doctrines he brings forward bear every internal mark of such an origin. Let us look at some of them, as set forth by himself.

His grand fundamental statement, which is to crowd out and replace the vulgar doctrine that the nations of Europe, speaking languages once demonstrably the same, are probably relations by blood to one another, is this (p. 53): "There has detached itself from the populations inhabiting the heights of the Hindu-Kuh a stock of peoples which has directed itself toward the West, and has imposed its idiom and the character of its language upon the tribes which, later, mingling themselves with the primitive peoples of European countries, have formed the Greek, Roman, Germanic, Celtic, and Slavic nationalities." Anything more definite than this, it will be seen, no reasonable man could ask for. We are pointed to the precise mountain summits where was formed the original Indo-European tongue, in the mouths of a people possessed of a propagative force unknown elsewhere in the world; which people afterward — coming down, we may suppose, on sleds or with the avalanches — first taught certain tribes, not further identified, to speak, which tribes then, by additional intermixture, made up the European nations. As M. Oppert gives us neither here nor elsewhere any account of the data whence he derives his wonderful conclusions, we can only conjecture why he should insert but two intermediate steps between his pure Aryans and

their mixed modern representatives, rather than half a dozen, or twenty, or a hundred. They remind us not a little of the demiurges whom the Indian cosmogony reverently interposes between the awful Supreme Being and his humble human offspring; or of the animals which the cosmology of the same Indians sets, one after another, beneath the earth, before arriving finally at the elephants, which need no further supporters, because their legs "reach all the way down." We seem to recognize in them, therefore, the influence of the character of Sanskrit Professor, in which M. Oppert addresses us — and with pleasure; for we can find no traces of that character anywhere in his essay, if not here. Yet it cannot be wholly out of veneration for the "Aryans" that they are set up at such a far-off height, barometrical and other, above us dwellers upon the surface; for our author exclaims later (p. 56), with unmistakable heartiness: "One has proclaimed that the Greeks were Aryans, which, luckily for them, they are not." Wherein has consisted this superior good luck of the Greeks we are fully informed in another place (p. 62): "This people of the Greeks itself has been formed out of divers Asiatic elements, ingrafted upon a foundation of primitive population not yet recognized; it has had to endure the invasion of the Aryan race, which has imposed upon it the Greek tongue;" and he then goes on to point out that it has absorbed also a "powerful parcel" of Semitic blood and spirit. All this, again, without any statement of reasons. "Thus saith J. Oppert" is to be accepted by us as a sufficient ground of belief in anything whatever. Elsewhere (p. 58 *seq.*) he indicates in considerable detail how and in what proportions the Oriental element, the Ugrian, and the "aboriginal European, or Iberian," have mingled to form the commonly reputed branches of the Indo-European family; he traces the difference of constitution among the different sections of the Letto-Slavic branch, as the Russians, Poles, and

Lithuanians, giving the palm of purity as "Aryans" to the last. The Pelasgians and the Etruscans make a considerable figure in his combinations, as in those of all scholars who deliberately cut loose from tangible evidences, and prefer to carry on their calculations with factors of unknown value. He has (p. 63) nothing to say against the idea that the Etruscans are a Semitic race; and, "moreover, does not hesitate to see in the Etruscans the relatives of the Pelasgians, were it only for linguistic reasons of a certain importance" — the linguistic character which they possess in common being, in truth, simply the fact that nobody knows anything reliable about either of them.

We have here an intimation that, after all, our author would not wholly reject the aid of linguistic science in determining ethnological questions; that he only demurs to its being appealed to by other persons than himself, or to sustain views which do not accord with his preconceived notions. Other evidences to the same effect peep out here and there. A list of Greek words is given us (p. 64), selected from an asserted "very great quantity" in that tongue which are of Semitic origin; and we may infer (although it is not so stated) that our author's belief, already quoted, in the extensive infusion of Semitic blood into the Greek nation rests upon their evidence. Now there is, doubtless, in Greek, as in every other Indo-European tongue, no small number of words which are not to be traced back to roots recognized as Indo-European in other dialects of the family: but the assumption is by no means to be lightly made that they are not Indo-European; and it must be an exceedingly wary, circumspect, and profoundly learned etymological science — one, in short, as much unlike M. Oppert's as possible — which shall be entitled to declare them evidence of the admixture of any particular foreign element. That the list given is to be satisfactorily proved Semitic we have no

confidence whatever; it is not hard to find in a variety of quarters superficially plausible derivations for such stray words, if a sufficiently loose method be followed.

Again, the theory that the Lithuanians are peculiarly pure Indo-Europeans cannot, so far as we see, rest on other grounds than the peculiarly primitive aspect of the Lithuanian language, which, as every comparative philologist knows, has more antique features by far than any other now spoken dialect of the whole great family. So that M. Oppert, after all, makes inferences from grammatical facts, in a manner quite unworthy a personal pupil of the great master whom he extols to us as a grammarian pure and absolute. The only feature by which his method differs from that of a mere ordinary comparative philologist is his unquestioning assumption that nothing but a mixture of blood can make the language of one branch of a family change more rapidly than that of another; and by this he may count on continuing to be distinguished from all the comparative philologists.

Yet again, we should be curious to know how he has found out that there was a primitive Iberian population of Europe, if not by deduction from the character of the language spoken by the Basques, the modern representatives of the old Iberian inhabitants of Spain. Even here, however, as in the case last cited, he shows that he is no mere comparative philologist. The latter would be likely to reason somewhat after this fashion: "The Basque tongue is, so far as can at present be discovered, unconnected with any other upon the earth. The Iberians, then, cannot have been either an Indo-European or a Scythian (Altaic) people. And, considering their position, it is in a very high degree probable that the soil which they held at the dawn of history was occupied by them before the other great races which now possess Europe had entered it, or before these had extended

themselves so widely. Geographical names which seem to be of Iberian extraction, too, indicate that they were once spread over a wider tract; and it is impossible to say of how large a territory they may have been dispossessed by intruders from the eastward; perhaps they are the scanty relics of a race which might, with reference to the latter, lay claim to the appellation of aboriginal European: these are points respecting which, in the absence of all decisive evidence, we can only form conjectures." Our author, however, being endowed with a direct intuition, such as is not vouchsafed to the world at large in matters of this nature, is not limited to conjectures: to him the Iberians are, categorically, the aborigines of Europe, and an element which has powerfully influenced and altered the Celtic race in Gaul.

There are other and more important cases to be pointed out where M. Oppert takes up certain of the conjectures or contingent probabilities of linguistic science, and, in the mighty alembic of his interior consciousness, transforms them into indubitable facts. It is thus with regard to the summit of the Hindu-Kuh, as centre of dispersion of the Indo-European mother-tribe. The suggestion of such a thing has, we believe, only a linguistic ground, and that one, too, of no value whatever. We are called upon to assume, in the first place, that because the Aryan or Indo-Persian branch of the Indo-European speech is less changed than any other from the inferable original tongue of the family, therefore those who speak it must have stayed in or close to the original family home. But the inference is a *non sequitur*, pure and simple. We might just as reasonably hold that the Icelanders are nearest to the original home of the Germanic tribes, or the Lithuanians to the place of dispersion of the Letto-Slavic races. Fixity of speech does not necessarily imply fixity of seat; nor the contrary. Then, in the second place, we are required to believe that, since the Hindu-

Kuh range lies between the Iranian and Indian territories, these two peoples must have been born on its tops, and rolled off its opposite sides into their later places of abode; and this is, to say the least, as wild an assumption as the other. Beyond all question, the Sanskrit-speaking tribes made their way into India through the passes of the Hindu-Kuh, out of northeastern Iran; but they may have come in company with the Iranians almost from the ends of the earth to the point where their roads parted. A kind of support has been sought for this theory in the geographical records of the first chapters of the Vendidad, one of the books of the Zend-Avesta, but altogether vainly; anything more uncritical and futile is rarely attempted than the conversion of the scanty and confused notices of countries lying within the horizon of the author of that document into authentic traditions of the course of Aryan migrations. To find, now, this combination of baseless hypotheses, not admitted even as hypotheses by any cautious linguist, set up as a truth unquestioned and unquestionable over the heads of the linguists, by one who is decrying their loose and arbitrary methods, is rather trying to the patience: we hope that such a use may at least have the good effect of discrediting still more widely and speedily the hypotheses themselves.

We will speak of only one other procedure of the same character, but one which is perhaps the most fundamentally important among them all. M. Oppert, as we have seen, puts forth the doctrine that the correspondence of Indo-European languages by no means shows a race connection, a common descent, of the nations speaking those languages, but is the result of propagation from a single centre through the heterogeneous masses of a widely extended population; that it represents an imposition of linguistic materials and usages by one tribe upon others: and he puts it forth as what no one who

is less wrong-headed and untrustworthy than a comparative philologist would think of denying, or even of doubting, and as needing, therefore, no laborious demonstration. Accordingly, he is at the trouble to point out none of the grounds on which, in his own mind, the doctrine rests. Yet he does furnish, in an appended sentence which we did not translate above, an apparent hint at them. After laying down his thesis, and stating (p. 54) that the time of commencement of the propagative process is doubtful, but may be conjecturally set somewhere between the fortieth and the twentieth century before Christ, he adds: "The same phenomenon has since, with more force in a linguistic point of view, been twice brought about, first by the Romans, then by the Arabs." It is, we are persuaded, doing no injustice to his argument to draw it out in full somewhat thus: "The examples of the Latin and the Arabic show that the use of a language *may be* extended far beyond the limits of the race to which it originally belonged; that peoples of diverse lineage, over a reach of country ranging at least as far as from the mouths of the Danube to the Pillars of Hercules, *may* come to speak the dialect of a single petty district; therefore, he is a dolt who does not see that this *must be* the explanation of whatever likeness exists among the Indo-European languages, from the western shores of Ireland to the mouths of the Ganges." That is to say, we have once more a linguistic possibility, which the philosopher's stone of M. Oppert's absolute knowledge has transmuted into a pure and shining certainty.

How arbitrary and unauthorized such a conversion is, needs not to be pointed out. We should be wasting time and labor if we set ourselves about making clear that, in order to prove the analogy a good one, and capable of explaining the spread of Indo-European language, it would be necessary for us to examine the circumstances which have rendered possible the extension of the Latin and

Arabic, and to inquire whether the same were supposable as accompaniments of Indo-European migration or conquest; and that, even if they were found supposable, we should only have furnished an alternatively acceptable explanation of the facts we are seeking to account for; positive testimony from some other quarter would be required, in order to make us accept it instead of the other. We do not discover in M. Oppert's paper the slightest indication that he has ever looked at the subject in this light; and, so far as he is concerned, it would be enough to place it thus before him, and demand that he furnish us reasons and reasonings, instead of mere assumptions, before we either believe him or take the trouble to refute him. Yet, as the question is one of much consequence, and as the same analogy stands in many minds in the way of an acceptance of the ethnic coherency of the Indo-European nations, a brief discussion of it will not, perhaps, be out of place here.

The first point to be noticed is, that the Indo-European languages are really one, one in their fundamental substance and essential structure. None of them is Indo-European in the same sense as the English is Romanic, as the literary Persian is Arabic, as the literary Turkish and Hindustani are Persian and Arabic — namely, by the infusion of a store of words, ready made, into the vocabulary of a tongue to whose grammatical fabric they are strangers. It is, indeed, assumed by a few superficial and ill-informed scholars, rude skeptics as to all the results of comparative philology, that this is the case; but we have no idea that M. Oppert himself holds such an opinion. If Bopp and his school have accomplished anything whatever, they have shown, beyond the reach of cavil, that the branches of Indo-European speech have sprung from a single stock; that they are not independent growths, upon which certain common elements have been ingrafted. They all count with the same numerals, call their in-

dividual speakers by the same pronouns, address parents and relatives by the same titles, decline their nouns upon the same system, compare their adjectives alike, conjugate their verbs alike, form their derivatives by the same suffixes. That any missionary tribe or tribes should, by dint of superior capacity, civilization, and warlike prowess, or by any other kind of superiority, have exercised an influence producing such results as these over so wide an area, is absolutely impossible. Nothing known to us in the history of language lends the slightest degree of support to a supposition like this; unless, indeed, we could assume that the peoples affected had, up to that time, been absolutely destitute of speech, and were obliged to learn to talk outright from their civilizers — a thing which no sensible man has suggested, or is likely to suggest. The superiority of one race impresses itself upon the language of another race with which it is brought in contact, not by displacing that language, but by infusing into it a certain body of new expressions, varying in number and character according to the degree and kind of influence exerted. To displace a language outright, the community that has spoken it must be fairly incorporated into that whose speech it adopts. There is no other way. This was the process which Rome carried on upon a surprising scale, and which has made the history of the Latin language so unlike that of the tongues of other conquering races, as the Persians, the Mongols, the Germans, the Normans; or even of colonizing and civilizing races, like the Phœnicians and the Greeks. There was an intensity of assimilative force in the Roman organization, military and civil, for which the rest of the known history of the world affords no parallel, and hardly an explanation. We can point out the elements of the force exerted; but the degree and extent of their combined action exceed our expectation, and, as yet, our comprehension. The Romans fused together into one body, whose whole life was gov-

erned by pulsations from the central imperial city, first, the discordant provinces of Italy; then, one after another, the territories of Southern Europe in which we now find the Romanic tongues spoken. They carried everywhere a highly developed civilization, to which finally a new religion lent its aid, and which was strengthened by writing and a literature; and these, as the whole history of language shows, increase immensely the capacity of a dialect for extension and assimilation of other dialects among which it is intruded. Only the coöperation of all the forces we have mentioned, working for centuries at their highest rate of efficiency, enabled the Latin to crowd out the vernaculars of so many races. Its spread was not coextensive with the limits of Roman empire, yet less with the limits of Roman civilization and religion. It was confined to that part of the Empire which was longest and most thoroughly held in hand and trained, as it were, by Rome. Britain, though more than once overrun and fully conquered, though penetrated by military roads and sprinkled with colonies, though to no small extent civilized and Christianized, yet lay too far away, and was too soon relinquished, for the process of assimilation of speech to work itself completely out; and Britain retained its Celtic tongues. The countries of Asia and Africa were in a similar position — protected, too, in part, by the possession of a high culture of their own. And no sooner did the aggressive force of the Empire become weakened, and the severity of its hold upon its possessions relaxed, than the extension of Latin speech, save by the migrations of Latin-speaking races, came to an end. Since then, the acceptance of Roman civilization and religion has no longer carried with it the adoption of the language of Rome, but only the reception and naturalization of a certain proportion of Latin words, according to the more general analogy of such cases. The exceptional conditions being removed, their abnormal effect has also ceased.

The spread of the Arabic presents a similar combination of exceptional conditions, but in a very inferior degree; and the whole phenomenon is much more easily explained by reference to them. Here, again, we have conquest and organized empire, a religion which carried with itself a whole compulsory system of institutions, and a literature of which the chief work, the work of daily and hourly use by every true believer, the Koran, might never be translated; so that a Mohammedan nation in which the Arabic language was not taught was an impossibility. But the extension of the Arabic as a vernacular has not been wonderful, outside of the Arabic race. Compared with the immense area of the peninsula of Arabia itself, the neighboring territories into which that race overflowed, and in which, aided by the influences we have mentioned, it made its language the prevailing or exclusive one, are not excessively wide. They are merely Mesopotomia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, together with the line of coast-country bordering the north and northwest of Africa. Southern Spain was once a colony from this last region; but the boundaries of the language in Spain were determined by those of the Saracenic race, and with the expulsion of that race it went out also, leaving only scanty relics in the general tongue of the country. And if, in the other direction, abundant traces of Arabic speech are found all the way even to the heart of India, they only illustrate the ordinary case of infusion of foreign elements into a vocabulary; they offer nothing which is to be paralleled with the extension of Indo-European language.

From this exposition, brief as it is, may be seen, we think, with tolerable distinctness, what is involved in the assumption that the spread of the Latin and the Arabic furnishes a sufficient explanation of that of Indo-European speech. Organized empire, enforced unity of institutions, literary culture, are the influences that have made possible

the former; let them be shown to have accompanied the latter, and we will allow that M. Oppert's thesis may, at least, be true. If, however, they are, as we believe them to be, excluded by the necessities of the case — for who has ever found their traces, or will look to find them, among the wide-spread branches of this family, many of which are seen, at the dawn of history, in a state of utter wildness and absence of civilization? — then we must refuse to be satisfied with the parallel, and must continue to hold, as hitherto, that the boundaries of Indo-European language have been approximately determined by the spread and migrations of a race.

Of course, every sound and cautious linguistic scholar is mindful that language is no absolute proof of descent, but only its probable indication, and that he is not to expect to discover, in modern tongues, clear and legible proofs of the mixture which the peoples that speak them have undergone. Such a thing as a pure and unmixed race, doubtless, is not to be met with in the whole joint continent of Europe and Asia, whose restless tribes have been jostling and displacing one another for ages past. And especially in the case of a great stock like the Indo-European, which has spread so widely from a single point over countries which were not before uninhabited, there must have been absorptions of strange peoples, as well as extrusions and exterminations; one fragment after another must have been worked into the mass of the advancing race; and, as the result of such gradual dilution, the ethnic character of some parts of the latter may, very probably, have been changed to a notable degree. These are the general probabilities of the case: how far we shall ever get beyond such an indefinite statement of them is, at present, very uncertain; perhaps they may always remain as elements of theoretic doubt in the inferences of the ethnologist, possessing a recognizable but indeterminate value; perhaps the combined efforts of physical and lin-

guistic science and of archæology may, at some time, fix their actual worth. But a heavy responsibility rests upon him who, in the present condition of science, attempts to appreciate them, and puts forth a sharp-cut and dogmatic statement respecting what has been the pre-historic history of this and that nation. To M. Oppert's efforts in this direction we cannot ascribe any value whatever. Nor can we refrain from expressing our astonishment that a scholar of his rank should be willing to present to a class of pupils, and then to the world, such an ill-considered tirade, such a tissue of misrepresentations of linguistic science, combined with assumptions as compared with which the worst he charges against comparative philologists are of no account. Unless some explanation and palliation can be made out in his behalf, our confidence in him as a philologist and ethnologist, as an investigator of the memorials of ancient time, will be seriously undermined and shaken, if not altogether destroyed.

A kind of explanation of some of the vagaries of this paper suggests itself to us with so much plausibility that we cannot forbear giving it expression, even though doubtful how far we are justified in judging our author's motives. That his polemic is aimed with special directness against M. Renan and the latter's opinions is very evident, both from express references and from less open, but yet intelligible hints. He is particularly severe upon his colleague's denial to the Semitic race of a part of that importance in the history of humanity with which it is generally credited. M. Renan is an Indo-European, who, being a special student and teacher of Semitic philology, seems to abuse this position of vantage in order to decry the Semites, and extol unduly the race to which he himself belongs. It appears, then, as if M. Oppert, occupying a contrary position — being, on the one hand, a Semite by birth, and, on the other, a professor of the chief of the Indo-European languages — had thought it

incumbent upon him to undertake to turn the tables, and give the *soi-disant* Indo-European race a thorough setting-down. We have no intention of assuming the defense of M. Renan's peculiar views; with many of them our own opinion is quite at variance. But we must say that we do not think M. Oppert the man to accomplish the task he has here taken upon himself. The positions of the two antagonists are not, after all, quite correlative. M. Renan is confessed, by foes as well as friends, to be a Semitic scholar of the highest rank, and a man of sincere enthusiasm and fervid genius, who clothes his thoughts in such beautiful forms that one cannot read them without a lively æsthetic pleasure, even when most disagreeing with them. M. Oppert has done nothing on the score of which he can lay claim to repute as a Sanskritist, nor is he known as a comparative philologist: these are subjects which lie outside his proper department. And if he cannot impose upon us by his authority, so neither can he attract us by his eloquence: his present essay is as heavy in style, as loose and vague in expression, as it is unsound in argument and arrogant in tone. We have seldom fallen in with the production of an author of his claims to attention which has so thoroughly disappointed us, and moved us to opposition.

VIII.

MÜLLER'S LECTURES ON LANGUAGE.[1]

FIRST NOTICE (1865).

FEW who read at all, we are sure, can fail to be acquainted with the valuable series of popular lectures on language, by Professor Max Müller, published in London something over three years since, and soon after reprinted in America. The last year has brought the English public a new series, and it also is now put within our reach by the same American publisher, who has honorably purchased from the author the right to issue American editions of both works: we may read them, then, in their handsome Cisatlantic dress — not less elegant and tasteful, if less luxurious, than that furnished them in Paternoster Row — without any qualms of conscience. The new book will doubtless gain the same wide circulation and high appreciation which was won by the old one. The reputation of Professor Müller in this department of science is not excelled, if it is equaled, by that of any other man who writes for the English-speaking public. In England itself his authority is well-nigh supreme: hardly any one ventures to oppose, or

[1] 1. *Lectures on the Science of Language delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in February, March, April, and May*, 1863. By Max Müller, M. A., etc. Second Series. With thirty-one wood-cuts. London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green. 1864. 8vo. Pp. viii., 600.

2. *The Same*. New York: Charles Scribner. 1865. 12mo. Pp. 622. [Published by arrangement with the Author.]

even to criticise with freedom and independence, the doctrines he teaches. That these have not been accepted altogether without reserve, however, is shown by the Preface to his present work, in which he very gracefully expresses his especial acknowledgments to those who have differed with him, and craves further criticism, as well as friendly indulgence. Solicitous to win as much as possible of his gratitude, and impressed with the necessity of submitting to a careful examination views which are likely to be implicitly received by so many admiring readers, we propose to use all liberty and plainness of speech in finding fault with, as well as in praising, what seems to us to call for either treatment.

The excellences and defects of this work are the same, in the main, with those of its predecessor. Foremost among their common faults we should account the looseness of their plan. There is no thoroughly systematic and orderly presentation of the subject dealt with; these are lectures not so much *on* the science of language as *about* it — round about it, touching here and there upon points to which their position and connections give special interest. This was a very noticeable peculiarity of the first series. It did not put before the student a clear and connected idea of what the science is, by what methods it proceeds, what it has proved, and how. While enlightened by its information, edified by its illustrations, and charmed by its eloquence, he yet rose from its perusal with an unsatisfied feeling. It had the air of a book somewhat hastily put together, of such materials as the author had at hand. It even contained whole paragraphs and pages nearly identical with what he had already published, once and again, under his own name. There were passages in it — such as the inquiry into the precise year when Bishop Ulfilas died, and the detailed history of Greek study at Rome — which had no bearing, or but the slightest, upon the proper theme of the work. And

one or two of the most important subjects treated of — for example, the nature of the forces which are active in producing the changes of language, with the resulting place of linguistics among the sciences, and the origin of language — were handled in an exceedingly scanty, superficial, and unsatisfactory manner.

But this planlessness is, as might naturally have been expected, yet more characteristic of the second series than of the first. The author was, as he himself informs us, in something of a quandary as to what he should take up as the subject of a new course of lectures. He had thought of filling out in more detail the descriptive map already given of the world's languages; but concluded to abstain from such a task, as one affording him little chance for originality. We cannot but approve his decision: his map was quite full enough for its purpose; there were other parts of his system which called much more loudly for expansion and support. Without, however, directing his particular attention to such parts, as pointed out to him by the criticisms which his views had met with, he decided to limit his inquiries to the field of the Sanskrit, Greek, Latinic, and Germanic languages, and to derive from these "some of the fundamental principles of the science;" and he divides his course into two parts, one of which he promises shall deal with the outside or body of language, the other with its soul or inside, with the origin, growth, and decay of ideas. Here is a semblance of a plan — and yet not an altogether promising one: for why should we not have *all* the fundamental principles, at least all that were left undiscovered in the first series of lectures? But it is carried out in the same loose and straggling way in which it is stated, as will plainly appear, we think, from an analysis and criticism of the lectures in their order, to which we now proceed.

The first lecture is styled Introductory, on new materials and new theories. It refers with deserved praise and

pride to the complete decipherment in our generation of the Persian cuneiform inscriptions, glances at the absurdly exaggerated ideas entertained by certain Polynesian and African scholars respecting the value to linguistic science of their own pet languages, and then goes off upon a series of illustrations intended to show that what is true in one language may be true in others, related or unrelated, and false in yet others. The illustrations are in themselves highly interesting and instructive, as is usual with those which our author adduces; they are admirably chosen, acutely worked out, and ingeniously applied; they are full of suggestiveness; better we have nowhere seen; they constitute the chief charm of both works. In thus praising them, we have at the same time indicated what seems to us their fault. They are too prominent and engrossing; they often seem introduced more for their own sake than on account of what they should illustrate; they overlie the principles to which they ought to be kept subordinate, and draw off our attention from them; sometimes, when we are looking for argument or exposition, our author runs off into his studies among words, in which we follow him with pleased attention, yet with the feeling that we are balked of what we had a right to expect. We stop to ask ourselves, "What does all this prove?" and we are disappointed at the exiguity of the results to which we are conducted. Thus, in the present instance, after some nine pages of illustrations, we are told (p. 31 [1]) that "This must suffice as an illustration of the principles on which the Science of Language rests, namely, that what is real in modern formations must be admitted as possible in more ancient formations, and that what has been found to be true on a small scale may be true on a larger scale." The conclusion sounds almost like a bathos: we

[1] We refer to the American (stereotype) edition alone, because the half-dozen English editions differ, of course, in their paging.

should have called these, not fundamental principles, but obvious considerations, which hardly required any illustration.

Next we have an implied defense of our author's "Turanian" family of languages, which many comparative philologists reject, as founded by him on a wholly insufficient basis of linguistic evidence. We establish our Indo-European family on traceable coincidences of material and structure, but we ought not, he thinks, to require the same among "Turanian" languages; for the geologist does not look for fossils in granite and trap. Very true: but neither does the geologist venture to pronounce two beds of granite or outflows of lava contemporaneous, because they agree in general composition. Many more pages of interesting illustration follow, bearing upon the same point, and the case is summed up thus (p. 41): "Shall we say, therefore, that these languages cannot be proved to be related, because they do not display the same criteria of relationship as French and English, Latin and Greek, Celtic and Sanskrit?" We answer, Yes, certainly, unless they display other criteria of equivalent value. Two languages cannot possibly be proved related by showing that they both possess such tendency to variation that the material evidences of their common origin may have become obliterated; this will merely forbid us to maintain too dogmatically that they are not and cannot be related. Special correspondences of structure, like those between Chinese and Cochin-Chinese, or between Greenlandic, Algonquin, and Mexican, may perhaps be accepted as indications of cousinship; but to tie together by the name "Turanian" tongues as diverse as Turkish, Tamil, Siamese, Polynesian, and American, is totally opposed to all sound principle in linguistics.

More illustration of linguistic variation, drawn from the curious usages of certain Polynesian and South African peoples, and the introductory lecture is closed.

The second lecture is styled Language and Reason. It begins with a very long, and, for once, a very tedious, analysis of the philosophical system on which Bishop Wilkins, two centuries ago, tried to found an artificial and universal language; intended to guide us to the conclusion that, while such a language might possibly be invented, it would be very different from languages actually existing, and that we are not to suppose, until taught the contrary, that any of the latter were ever made in this manner. This seems to us much like another elaborate attempt to prove an axiom; but, in the apprehension of Professor Müller, it has a very decided and positive value. It is a part of the argument whereby he controverts a false view of language, held, according to him, by many authorities, and against which he makes fight repeatedly, in different parts of his Lectures. Thus, in the immediate sequel of the analysis referred to, he declares (p. 72): "There never was an independent array of determinate conceptions waiting to be matched with an independent array of articulate sounds." And again, in the eighth lecture (p. 353): "But . . . . Locke never perceived that general ideas and words are inseparable, that the one cannot exist without the other, and that an arbitrary imposition of articulate sounds to signify definite ideas is an assumption unsupported by any evidence. Locke never seems to have realized the intricacies of the names-giving process; and though he admits frequently the difficulty, nay, sometimes the impossibility, of our handling any general ideas without the outward signs of language, he never questions for a moment the received theory that at some time or other in the history of the world men had accumulated a treasure of anonymous general conceptions, to which, when the time of intellectual and social intercourse had arrived, they prudently attached those phonetic labels which we call words."

Now, in all this, we think that Professor Müller is

combating a phantom of his own creating. We fail to see that Locke, or any other writer of consequence enough to be worth our author's refuting, holds that which he styles in this paragraph "the received theory." It is a common — perhaps generally an innocent, certainly always a gross and needless — misrepresentation of those who believe in the antecedency of ideas to words, and in the conventionality of language, to hold them up thus as maintaining that men first acquired a great stock of ideas, and then assembled in convention, decided to give names to them, and selected the names. What is actually meant by the conventionality of language, we may illustrate by a single example. Of the words *you*, *Sie*, *vous*, *tu*, *ella*, *Usted*, σύ, *twam*, *bhavân*, *toy*, *ngò*, and the thousand others of like meaning which might be cited, is there one which is the natural and necessary representative of the idea of the person spoken to, and without which that idea could not have existed? Is not every one of them dependent for its meaning on usage — that is to say, convention? Addressing my neighbor, I say *you*, because that is the custom in the community to which we belong: he has learned this sign, and perhaps knows no other. If I go to France, I say *vous*, if to Italy, *voi* or *ella*, for the same reason; or, falling in with some one who has learned Latin, we may use *tu* together. I may cast all these signs away, and devise a brand-new one of my own, which seems to me better suited to its purpose; and if I can only persuade the rest of the community to look at the matter in the same light, to adopt the new word and forget the old, we shall have altered our common language, arbitrarily and conventionally, to that extent. And the same is the case with every item of which any language is made up. One sign is as good as another, provided only it be mutually intelligible between speaker and hearer.

And what, again, is implied in the doctrine that ideas

are anterior to words? That any race or individual ever finished the work of elaborating ideas, and then turned to that of contriving articulate signs for them? Not in the least: but only this, that each individual idea precedes its own sign; that no name or sign would ever be devised and applied, but for the previous existence in the mind of something calling for a sign. An idea, then, of any class, may exist independently of any word expressing it. This our author himself perceives and acknowledges, when he says (p. 324) that, "Out of the endless number of general notions that suggest themselves to the observing and gathering mind, those only survive and receive definite phonetic expression which are absolutely requisite for carrying on the work of life." How, alongside this statement, can stand the one quoted above, that a word is necessary to the existence of a general idea? Not every general idea becomes incarnate in a word; many a one has to be content with expression by a phrase; and who has not been conscious of thoughts which language furnishes no means of precisely signifying; which must be approached on this side and on that, guarded, limited, in order to their communication to others as they lie in our own minds? Professor Müller says (p. 82) that, "without words, not even such simple ideas as white or black can for a moment be realized." But why not? Suppose, for instance, that there occurred but one white substance, namely snow, in the nature by which we are surrounded; it is both possible and altogether probable that, while we had a name for the substance, we should have none for the color; and yet, should we on that account any the less apprehend that color, as distinct from those of other objects, even as we now apprehend a host of shades of blue, green, red, purple, for which we possess no specific appellations? If then, on going southward, we made acquaintance with cotton, should we fail to notice and fully to realize its accordance with snow in the

quality of whiteness, even though we had no name for the quality? Certainly not: we should probably call cotton "snowy," and, as we went on to meet with other substances of like quality, we should call them "snowy" also; and at length — particularly if we had left the zone of snow behind us — "snowy" would come to mean to us what "white" does now, and "snowiness" would signify "whiteness." This is a universally typical example: we make a new word, or give a word a new meaning, because we have an idea which wants a sign. To maintain that the idea waits for its generation till the sign is ready, or that the generation of the idea and of the sign is a simple indivisible process, is, in our view, precisely equivalent to holding, because infants cannot live in this climate without clothing and shelter, that no child is or can be born until a *layette* and a nursery are ready for its use, or that along with each child are born its swaddling clothes and a cradle.

It is incontrovertibly true that such thinking and such reasoning as we are in the constant habit of doing would be impossible without the aid of words. But this is far from justifying us in the inference that thought is impossible without language. So the processes of the calculus, of analytical geometry, nay, even the working out of a simple proportion, where the factors are of higher denomination than hundreds or thousands, are impossible without the aid of written figures and diagrams; yet mathematical relations and our power to apprehend them are neither identical with nor dependent on such signs. So, again, to build steam-engines and tubular bridges, to weave satins and Brussels carpets, to demolish mountains and fill up valleys, is impossible without the aid of complicated and powerful machinery; yet we do not for that deny all power and efficiency to the bare human hands. Language is the instrument of thought, the machinery with which thought works; an instrument by which its

capacity is indefinitely increased, but which is not identical with it, which is only one of its own products.

We have dwelt at some length upon this point in our author's system, because it is one of prime interest and fundamental consequence, and because his error in regard to it appears to us to vitiate no small portion of his linguistic philosophy, involving him in reasonings and conducting him to conclusions which are alike opposed to sound philosophy and to common sense. Listen to the final argument by which he proves the indissoluble connection of ideas and words. The word *experiment*, he says (p. 84), has a real existence. But change its accent, alter one of its vowels or consonants, and it exists no longer; since "articulate sound without meaning is even more unreal than inarticulate sound." So *cháracter* has a meaning (and hence an existence) in English, as does *charácter* in German, and *caractère* in French; while each is non-existent in the other two languages named. If, then, articulate sounds exist nowhere, it follows that they could not have been picked up anywhere and added to our conceptions; hence, our conceptions can never have existed without them! Is this a serious argument, or is Professor Müller only laughing at us? Surely, the phonetic compounds *experíment*, *expóriment*, and so forth, when we utter them, are just as real existences as *expériment* itself; they are not precisely words, it is true, because a word is the conventionally established sign of an idea, and our usage accepts only the last of the three. Yet either of the first two is also a word, if it be uttered with the intent of signifying something, and if we understand what it is meant to signify. How, else, did we derive the third from the Latin *experiméntum*, without losing its "existence" on the way? A mispronunciation does not cost the life of a word — most luckily, or the English would become a dead language very fast. If our Hibernian domestic, on flitting, applies boldly for a *charrácterr*,

it would sometimes be convenient to be able to act as if the request, like the thing intended to be vouched for, were a nonentity.[1]

But by far the most serious of the errors to which our author is led by his false view of the relation between language and thought is his positive identification of speech and reason. Language, to him, is that property by which man differs from all other created things (p. 15); between language and reason there is no substantial, but merely a formal difference (p. 79); and so on. This may be taking a high view of language; it certainly is taking a very low view of reason. If only that part of man's superior endowments which finds its manifestation in language is to receive the name of reason, what shall we style the rest? We had thought that the love and intelligence, the soul, that looks out of a child's eyes upon us to reward our care long before it begins to prattle, were also marks of reason. We had thought that to build a cathedral was as characteristic of man as to construct an argument; that tapestry, and statues, and pictures, and symphonies were, no less than poetry, works of which human nature only is capable. It is to be presumed that Professor Müller thinks so too; why, then, does he strive to hold a view which denies it? He is not afraid to push his doctrine consistently to one of its extreme consequences, by maintaining (p. 79) that the uninstructed deaf and dumb have never given any true signs of reason, though they catch something of the rational behavior of those in whose society they live! Upon so small a thread, then, hangs the possession of our humanity! A fever in infancy, which leaves an abiding impress only on the auditory apparatus, while the rest of our organization retains its normal health, deprives us of reason, and reduces us to the level of the lower animals! And yet the lost possession is capable of being restored

[1] This argument is further discussed in the second notice (below, p. 272 *seq.*).

to us by instruction! Who shall venture to say longer that reason is a divine gift, inherent in human nature, and not rather the product of instruction? For it is certain that the young child, too, *learns* to speak from those about him; his "mother tongue," whatever may be his birth or blood, is English, or French, or Chinese, or Choctaw, according as the mother tongue of his nurses and instructors is one or the other of these. And if he were set alone upon a coral isle, to live among the birds and monkeys, he would grow up yet more mute than they, having not even a comrade to chatter or sing to. Of course, he would be only a savage, with reason uneducated, with capacities undeveloped; his condition would be raised but little, comparatively speaking, above that of the higher kinds of brute animals;— there are, indeed, whole tribes and races which are not much better off than that, even though possessed of language, and so dowered with the accumulated wisdom of countless generations of their ancestors;— yet he could not abdicate his human nature; he would still be our fellow creature, gifted with reason like ourselves, capable of a like training, expectant of a like destiny. Professor Müller can make no claim to which we will not gladly assent, in behalf of the importance of language as a means of education, its preëminence among the manifestations of reason, its indispensableness to the progress of man towards that perfection which he was meant to attain; we only protest against his confounding the manifestation with the thing manifested, the product with the producer, the means with the agent.

The remainder of the second lecture is occupied with discussions, for the most part sound and instructive, respecting roots, and their reality as the historical germs of speech. Our author is here again, as elsewhere, very severe upon those who hold the onomatopoetic origin of roots, but he does not venture a word in defense of his

own theory of "phonetic types," laid down in the last lecture of his first series.

The next lecture is "a dissection of the body of language;" that is, a physical description of the spoken alphabet. The author, in it, is content for the most part to eschew originality, and to report the observations and conclusions of others; and he has brought together a great deal of valuable matter, not easily attainable elsewhere, especially by English readers. The subject is profusely illustrated with wood-cuts, showing the vocal organs of the throat and mouth, and representing the different positions of these organs which give character to the different sounds. The exposition is professedly not exhaustive; only the more usual sounds of the alphabets familiar to us are described; some difficult and controverted points are passed over without notice; others are unsatisfactorily explained and determined. Thus, Professor Müller's view of the essential difference between vowels and consonants will not bear examination; his definition of the *wh* in *when*, etc., as a simple whispered counterpart of *w* in *wen*, instead of a *w* with a prefixed aspiration, is, we think, clearly false;[1] trilling or vibration is not characteristic of an *l*, nor necessarily of an *r*; the description of *ch* (in *church*) is both wavering and unintelligible; and so on. But especially his account of the *spiritus asper* and the *spiritus lenis*, and his explanation of the difference between such sounds as *z*, *v*, *b*, on the one hand, and *s*, *f*, *p*, on the other, is to be rejected. We have a right to be astonished that he revives for these two classes of letters the old names "soft" and "hard," which have happily for some time been going out of use, and fully adopts the distinction which they imply, although this distinction has been so many times exploded, and the difference of the two classes shown to consist in the intonation or non-intona-

[1] Respecting this point see further the second notice (below, p. 270 *seq.*).

tion of the breath during their utterance. It is in vain that he appeals to the Hindu grammarians in his support: they are unanimous against him; not one of them fails to see and define correctly the difference between "sonant" and "surd" letters.[1] He declares it physically impossible (p. 154) to intone a *b*, *d*, or *g*, although he had formerly (p. 143) quoted from Helmholtz, without dissent, the easy explanation of its possibility; namely, that air enough to support the intonation may be forced from the lungs into the closed cavity of the mouth. And he then proceeds to give a definition of his own, which either implies what he has just pronounced impracticable, or has no meaning at all. The fact which disturbs him, and deflects his reasonings from their true mark, is that the distinction of the sonant letters is capable of being preserved, to a certain degree, in whispering, or utterance with the *vox clandestina*. That the same is true of the vowels he has before admitted without difficulty. So, too, one may test the tone of a pipe without drawing a real note from it; one may distinctly whistle a tune through in a whisper, without a single resonant sound. It is as inherently distinctive of a *v* or *b* as of a *u* to be intoned; the fact, if it be one, that the utterance of the first two, as well as of the last, can be imitated by means of a tension of the vocal cords which falls just short of sonant vibration, is wholly unessential.

The fourth lecture takes for its theme the vast subject of phonetic change. It is filled with interesting information, learned illustration, and apt comment, and may be read with almost unmixed pleasure. Only we cannot think that Professor Müller has made out the fundamental distinction which he claims to exist between "phonetic decay" and "dialectic variation." The same agency brings them both about; they are alike produced by men, the users of language, mouthing over to suit

[1] Upon this point also, see the second notice (below, p. 264 *seq.*).

them the words which they pronounce, adapting their utterances to their convenience and their caprice. To suppose, as our author does, that such later variations of an original word as *quatuor*, *chatwar*, *keturi*, *tettares*, *fidvor*, require the assumption of an undefined pronunciation of the initial consonant of their common ancestor, is, to our apprehension, unnecessary. The general agreement of the Indo-European languages as to their mute consonants shows that their articulation was clear and distinct before the dispersion of the family, even as it is at present.

The fifth lecture, that on Grimm's law, is by far the weakest and least creditable to its author of any in the series. As is well known to all historic students of language, "Grimm's law" is the accepted name for a fact of prime consequence in the etymology of the Germanic languages. Taking the series of three mutes, *tenuis*, *aspirata*, and *media*, belonging to each organ — for example, *t*, *th*, and *d* — as exhibited in the words of the older Indo-European languages, we find that the Germanic tongues in general have pushed each of them forward one step, turning an original *t* into *th*, *th* into *d*, *d* into *t*; while the High-German dialects, to which the literary German belongs, have pushed each forward another step, converting an original *t* into *d*, *th* into *t*, *d* into *th* (replaced by a sibilant, *s* or *z*). Thus *tad* in Sanskrit is *that* in English, and *das* in German. The same is true of the series *k*, *kh*, *g*, and *p*, *ph*, *b*; the whole with certain restrictions and exceptions into which we cannot enter here. The phenomenon is perhaps the strangest and most puzzling of all those of its kind which the study of language has hitherto brought to light, and not one of the various explanations offered for it is satisfying to the mind. But our author's new explanation is altogether more unsatisfactory than any other; it is no real explanation, or even an attempt at

one; it is a mere denial that there is anything to be explained. According to him, it is all a matter of difference of subjective apprehension. The Indo-European mother tribe found it expedient to distinguish, for purposes of expression, three dental letters, *t*, *th*, and *d*, applying each to the designation of certain ideas. But the German part of the tribe looked at matters from a stand-point of their own; they preferred to apply *th* where the others were applying *t*, and then, in order to preserve intelligible distinctness, they had to shift the applications of *t* and *d* also; while, finally, the High-Germans, by a further idiosyncrasy, put *d* to use where the others were employing *t* and *th*, with, of course, the necessary consequence of a different application of their own *t* and *th*. Accordingly, says Professor Müller (p. 227),—

"Throughout the whole of this process there was no transition of one letter into another; no gradual strengthening, no gradual decay, as Grimm supposes. It was simply and solely a shifting of the three cardinal points of the common phonetic horizon of the Aryan nations. While the Hindus fixed their East on the *gh*, *dh*, and *bh*, the Teutons fixed it on the *g*, *d*, and *b*. All the rest was only a question of what the French call *s'orienter*. To make my meaning more distinct, I will ask you to recall to your minds the arms of the Isle of Man, three legs on one body, one leg kneeling towards England, the other towards Scotland, the third towards Ireland. Let England, Scotland, and Ireland represent the three varieties of consonantal contact; then Sanskrit would bow its first knee to England (*dh*), its second to Ireland (*d*), its third to Scotland (*t*); Gothic would bow its first knee to Ireland (*d*), its second to Scotland (*t*), its third to England (*th*); Old High-German would bow its first knee to Scotland (*t*), its second to England (*th*), its third to Ireland (*d*). The three languages would thus exhibit three different aspects of the three points that have successively to be kept in view; but we should have no right to maintain that any one of the three languages shifted its point of view after having once assumed a settled position; we should have no right to say that *t* ever became *th*, *th d*, and *d t*."

To us, we are constrained to say, all this exposition is

"simply and solely" — nonsense; the paragraph deserves to be quoted as a striking example of the way in which language ought not to be written about, if those who read are to understand and learn. It is a darkening of counsel by words without knowledge. Professor Müller is generally esteemed in England a prime authority for the existence, long since, of a primitive "Aryan" language, spoken by a primitive "Aryan" people, from which are descended the tongues and nations of Europe and Southwestern Asia. Does he, or does he not, believe that this people, before its dispersion, had certain definite mutes, which it applied to certain definite uses? Did that little portion of the original community from which the Germanic branch afterward descended say at first *tad*, along with the rest, changing its pronunciation at a later period to *that*, under the impulse of some motive as yet unexplained, while a certain lesser part of them yet more recently changed the *that* to *das?* or were *tad*, *that*, and *das* said indifferently by all the Aryans, and did those who favored the last two modes of utterance finally sort themselves out and emigrate, offended at the phonetic perversity of the rest, afterwards quarreling with one another, and breaking into two parties, on like grounds? If there is any other alternative supposition to be made, what is it? What is meant by having one's phonetic horizon shifted as to its points of compass? If Professor Müller should come down some morning with a bad cold in the head, and should say "by bad" instead of "my man" over his breakfast table, would his whole system of mutes be dislocated, and made to exchange places, as if they were playing the game of "puss in the corner?" We wait for further explanations, and prefer meantime to believe, with nearly the whole body of linguistic students, that this mutation of consonants, not less than the infinity of other phonetic changes, of inferior intricacy, which the study of language brings to light, is a real historical occurrence.

In a note to this same lecture, Professor Müller brings forward a very curious hypothesis, which we must not suffer to pass unnoticed, especially as he invites to it examination and criticism, and declares that he should be as glad to see it refuted as confirmed. It is as follows. He finds that the Germanic word 'fir' (*furh*, *foraha*, etc.) is the same which in Latin means 'oak' (namely, *quercus*), as it also signifies 'oak' in one or two Germanic dialects. Furthermore, the Greek φηγός, 'oak,' is identical with the Latin *fagus*, Gothic *bôka*, our *beech*. Now he has read in Lyell that the peat-bogs of Denmark show the nearly exclusive prevalence in that region, at a very early period (four to sixteen thousand years ago), of firs, which were succeeded in the same region by a prevailing growth of oak, and this, again, by the modern forests of beech. Combining these facts, he suggests that the Indo-European tribes may have come into Europe during the fir-period, and called the tree everywhere by its proper designation; while the turning of this word, in some quarters, into a name for 'oak' was an accompaniment and consequence of the replacement of the fir-forests by those of oak; and again, that the transition of the oak-period into the beech-period occasioned the conversion by the Germans and Latins of the old word for 'oak,' still retained in its primitive meaning by the Greeks, into a term signifying 'beech.' Hence, as the fir, oak, and beech periods are approximately accordant with the ages of stone, of bronze, and of iron, respectively, a valuable synchronism is thus discovered between the linguistic reckoning and the northern-archæological.

It will not be difficult, we think, to gratify our author by refuting this hypothesis. Not the very slightest shade of plausibility, that we can discover, belongs to it. Besides the various minor objections to which it is liable, it involves at least three impossible suppositions, either one

of which ought to be enough to insure its rejection. In the first place, it assumes that the indications afforded by the peat-bogs of Denmark are conclusive as regards the condition of all Europe — of all that part of it, at least, which is occupied by the Germanic and Italic races; that, throughout this whole region, firs, oaks, and beeches have supplanted and succeeded each other, notwithstanding that we find all of them, or two of them, still growing peaceably together in many countries. It assumes further, in the second place, that the Germanic and Italic races, while they knew and named the fir-tree only — so that later, when the oaks appeared, they could not find a designation for them otherwise than by changing the meaning of the old word for 'fir' — yet kept by them all the time, laid up in a napkin, the original term for 'oak,' ready to be turned into an appellation for 'beech,' when the oaks went out of fashion and the beeches came in! And finally, the hypothesis implies a method of transfer of names from one object to another which is totally inadmissible; this, namely — that, as the forest of firs gave way to that of oaks, the meaning of 'fir' in the word *quercus* gave way to that of 'oak;' and in like manner in the other case. Now if the Latins had gone to sleep some fine night under the shade of their majestic oaks, and had waked in the morning to find themselves *patulæ sub tegmine fagi*, they might naturally enough have been led, in their bewilderment, to give the old name to the new tree. But who does not see that, in the slow and gradual process by which, under the influence of a change of climatic conditions, one species of tree should come to prevail over another, the supplanter would not inherit the title of the supplanted, but would acquire one of its own, the two subsisting together during the period of the struggle, and that of the supplanted going out of use and memory as the species it designated disappeared?

Professor Müller himself notices one possible objection to his hypothesis, but makes little difficulty of disposing of it, as follows (p. 252): "Again, the skulls found in the peat deposits are of the lowest type, and have been confidently ascribed to races of non-Aryan descent. In answer to this, I can only repeat my old protest, that the science of language has nothing to do with skulls."

Whether this reply will be found as satisfactory as it is summary, may well be questioned. There is a certain sense in which the study of language is altogether independent of physical testimony; so far, namely, as concerns the classification and description of languages themselves, and their historical analysis. And yet, even here, physical evidences showing a mixture of diverse races may often be important auxiliaries to the explanation of proper linguistic phenomena. But so far as the science wears an ethnological aspect, so far as it attempts to deal with the history of human races, tracing their migrations and explaining their affiliations, so far must it admit the equal competency of physical science, and submit its conclusions to the review and criticism of physical ethnology. To derive from the changes of meaning of two words conclusions of a momentous character respecting the races of men inhabiting Europe in a primeval past, and to warn off with quiet disdain the physical interpellant, is not a proceeding calculated to bring the new science of language into credit with its sister branches of anthropological study.

The sixth lecture is entitled, "On the Principles of Etymology." It is composed mainly of illustrations, respecting which we can only repeat what we have already said — they are, for the most part, admirable. Objection, of course, may be taken to some of them. For example, we are by no means prepared to believe that the derivation of *gegend*, 'region,' from *gegen*, 'against,' was so distinctly present to the minds of the German tribes

who mingled with the Romanic peoples, that they should have been led to form in imitation of it a new Romanic word, *contrada*, *contrée*, 'country,' from *contra*, 'against.' But we have no inclination to enter into criticism of matters of detail like this, respecting which individual opinions cannot but differ. The title of the chapter seems to us a little too pretentious, since the examples and accompanying arguments are directed to the illustration of only a single etymological principle, which is thus stated: "Etymology is indeed a science in which identity, or even similarity, whether of sound or meaning, is of no importance whatever. Sound etymology has nothing to do with sound." Of course, our author does not mean precisely what this says; he has only given way, perhaps not altogether wisely, to an inclination to put forth his proposition in a paradoxical and punning form. What he intends, as appears abundantly from the context, is that similarity or dissimilarity of form or meaning is no decisive evidence for or against the relationship of words.

The heading of the next lecture, "On the Powers of Roots," displays the same harmless tendency to play upon words. The lecture itself is one of the more valuable of the series. Its first half is occupied with interesting general discussions, especially on Greek ideas respecting language, and on the principle of "natural selection" as operative in human speech; the second half is a tracing out of the ramifications and developments of a single root, the root *mar*, in the Indo-European languages, in which our author's extensive learning, his wide range of research, his acuteness in combination, and his skill in presentation, are favorably and pleasingly illustrated.

The eighth lecture is headed "Metaphor," and serves as an introduction to those which follow. It opens, again, with a somewhat general disquisition, having reference particularly to Locke's ideas respecting language; a sin-

gle paragraph we have already cited and criticised, in connection with the second lecture.

In the sequel of this discussion, it really seems as if Professor Müller were attempting to persuade us that such words as *nothingness*, *non-existence*, *extinction*, were words only, which, as having no idea beneath them, ought never to have been suffered to creep into the vocabularies and that those who dread and those who court extinction are equally the dupes of a congeries of meaningless articulations. We shall be prepared to rejoice at his success, and to use our utmost influence to have all words of the sort marked in the dictionaries as "obsolete," in order to their total omission later. He will thus at a blow annihilate — we beg pardon, put out of existence — no, extinguish — well, we may at least be permitted to say, reduce to a state of irretrievable pastness, a host of religious and philosophical systems.

Our author's illustrations of the wide reach and important bearings of the metaphorical use of language are full of interest. From metaphor, then, he makes an easy and well-managed transition to mythology, which he regards and treats from a point of view quite novel and striking. The importance of etymological researches in the explanation of mythological ideas and mythical stories has long been recognized; but Professor Müller is, so far as we know, the first to connect the subject so intimately with the study of language, pointing out to what extent mythology is, as he phrases it, a disease of language, a mistaken retranslation, into facts and tales, of expressions at first simply metaphorical in character. His essay on Comparative Mythology, published a few years since in one of the volumes of Oxford Essays (for 1856), attracted unusual attention and interest, and he has here worked over and expanded the subject, so that it fills four or five lectures, occupying the whole remainder of the present course. The titles of the successive lectures are, "The

Mythology of the Greeks;" "Jupiter, the Supreme Aryan God;" "Myths of the Dawn;" and "Modern Mythology." We have not space to follow our author into this part of his work; and we feel the less called upon to do so, as it is a digression from his true theme, a *hors d'œuvre*. Comparative mythology is not, in any proper sense of the term, a branch of linguistic science, however closely the two may be connected, and however necessary the one may be to the other; just as, to the apprehension even of Professor Müller, who holds language to be absolutely identical with thought and reason, linguistic science and mental science are not one and the same thing. That mythological discussions, then, running into such detail as the translation of Vedic hymns and criticism of the views of others respecting their interpretation, are made to constitute nearly a fifth of our author's whole double course on the Science of Language, is the most striking illustration we have found, perhaps, of that looseness of plan which we pointed out at the outset as characterizing these works.

And yet, it would be almost ungrateful in us to complain, in the present instance, of our author's departure from strict method, for these mythological lectures are by far the most original and valuable part of his second series, if not of both series. We do not feel sufficiently versed in such researches to trust ourselves to form an independent opinion as to how far his interpretations of Indo-European myths will be found well-grounded in all their details; but the novelty, profundity, and beauty of his investigations cannot but impress every one who examines them; his comprehension of the spirit of the mythological period seems in many respects more penetrating, and his representation of it more faithful and telling, than those of any who have hitherto made it the object of their studies.

While, however, our author's discussions of mythologi-

cal themes are thus calculated to attract the attention and high approval of scholars, as well as of the general public, and to add to his reputation, we cannot regard the rest of the work as altogether worthy of him. The errors and defects which we have pointed out in it — not in any fault-finding spirit, but because they were too conspicuous and important to be overlooked — are of such a character as seriously to detract from its authority and value. He has not, as it appears to us, been sufficiently mindful that *renommée*, as well as *noblesse*, *oblige;* he has taken his task too easily, confident that the public would be eager to receive, and ready to accept and approve, whatever it should please him to furnish. We are sure that he is fully capable of making a much better exhibition of this great and important subject, if he would take the pains to reason out his plan more thoroughly, carefully weighing the comparative importance of every part, and verifying the consistency of his various views and arguments; if he would lay out less of his strength upon the illustrative portion of his work, and more upon the theoretic and doctrinal, to which the other should be only subordinate and auxiliary.

SECOND NOTICE (1871).[1]

PROFESSOR MÜLLER'S well-known Lectures on Language have gone through a long series of editions in the country of their original publication, and he has now, with good judgment and to the manifest advantage of the public, put them forth in a less stately and a cheaper form, in what might fairly be called a "people's edition."

[1] *Lectures on the Science of Language.* By F. Max Müller, M.-A. Sixth edition. In two volumes. London: Longmans, Green, & Co. 1871. Sq. 12mo. Pp. xx., 481, and viii., 668.

They have been at the same time subjected to something of a revision, and, as compared with their first form (we have not examined the intermediate texts), present numerous differences of reading, of greater or less consequence; although, so far as we have observed, hardly any that touch the essence of their doctrine, or change their character in a material way. By the help of Scribner's authorized reprint (New York, 1863–1865), the work is now so familiarly known to our public, both in its strength and in its weakness, that we should not have cared to return to the subject of it here, if the author in his last Preface (vol. i. p. xi. note) had not seen fit to refer to and quote, with decided condemnation, our former criticism on his second series of lectures,[1] accusing us of unfairness or even stolidity. We cannot well help, therefore, accepting his implied challenge, and venturing a few words in our own defense. We should be very glad, too, if we can find occasion for it, to confess that we have misunderstood him and done him injustice, and to apologize for our unintended error.

Professor Müller speaks of our review as a specimen of "over-confident and unsuspecting criticism." Precisely what he may intend by the epithet "unsuspecting" is not clear to us. If collateral evidence did not indicate that he hardly meant it as complimentary, we should imagine that it showed his appreciation of our desire not to suspect evil in the author we had under treatment, but to give him the benefit of the most favorable interpretation that the case admitted. This was, in fact, our disposition toward him, and any over-confidence which we may have displayed was doubtless in the main a result of our simple-minded consciousness of rectitude. But the question of *over*-confidence is one to be settled by results: if Professor Müller can refute the objections we brought against certain parts of his work, and can prove that we were

[1] See above, p. 239 *seq.*

flagrantly wrong in bringing them, then whatever confidence we may have shown, be it more or less, was in excess, and we ought now to feel correspondingly humbled. He has undertaken such refutation in one particular instance, but, somehow or other, we do not feel humbled. We will try to state the case fairly, and leave it to be judged by our readers.

One of the principal points for which we blamed Professor Müller, in the review referred to, was, that he cast his powerful influence in favor of reviving the obsolescent names of *hard* and *soft*, as applied to the two great classes of consonants represented by *s*, *f*, *p*, on the one side, and *z*, *v*, *b*, on the other, instead of adopting for them *surd* and *sonant*, or other equivalent appellations, founded on the actual difference of the classes. The matter was one of real importance in phonetic theory and nomenclature; thus, for example, we had to show last year[1] that Mr. Peile had been misled respecting it, confessedly by Müller's authority, into perhaps the most serious error of his excellent work on Greek and Latin Etymology; and we notice later that Dr. Helfenstein, in his Comparative Grammar of the Teutonic Languages (an industrious and meritorious compilation), has the same false terminology, with the same want of appreciation of the true nature of the difference underlying it; and we cannot hold Müller guiltless of influencing the usage in this respect of an author by whom he is quoted as a prime and trusted authority. Müller had, in short, the opportunity of striking, in his lecture on phonetics, a stroke against *hard* and *soft* that would have well-nigh or quite finished them, so far as concerned their English use; and our regret that he chose to take the contrary course was great, and distinctly expressed.

Professor Müller replies to our criticism, not by defending the doctrine we ascribed to him, but by denying that

[1] See the *North American Review* for July, 1870 (vol. cxi. p. 206).

he ever held it, and accusing us of misrepresentation. We quote his answer entire: —

"I do not blame a writer in the 'North American Review' for not knowing that I myself have run full tilt against the terminology of 'hard' and 'soft' consonants as unscientific (*unwissenschaftlich*), and that I was one of the first to publish and translate in 1856 the more scientific classification into 'surd' and 'sonant' consonants as contained in the *Rigvedaprâtiçâkhya*. But the Reviewer might surely have read the *Lecture* which he reviewed, where on page 130 (now page 144) I said: 'The distinction which, with regard to the first breathing or spiritus, is commonly called *asper* and *lenis*, is the same which, in other letters, is known by the names of *hard* and *soft*, *surd* and *sonant*, *tenuis* and *media*.'"

There are three points in this reply. In the first place, Müller claims that he has run a tilt, somewhere, full against *hard* and *soft;* he does not inform us upon what field; we should rejoice to read the record of the encounter, if we only knew where to look for it. But the question was not what he might have done in some unknown lists, and at some moment of peculiarly knightly feeling; it was what he had done in this volume, in which he had undertaken to give the whole English reading public a systematic view and definition of phonetic relations. So far as here appeared, his "tilt" had been one of those chivalrous encounters in which a knight cherishes the utmost respect and affection for his antagonist, and, the affair once over, lives with him in more loving concord than ever. Again, as regards the second point, we were perhaps not quite so uninformed as Professor Müller chooses to assume of what he had done in his Rik Prâtiçâkhya, nor unappreciative of the necessity which drove him to the adoption in that work of terms which a large class of students of language, with Bopp at their head, had long been in the habit of using. The terms employed by the Prâtiçâkhya itself meant literally 'toneless' and 'having tone,' and to translate them by *hard* and *soft* would have been an inexcusable distortion. But we say

again, it was his Lectures that we were criticising, not his Prâtiçâkhya; and if we had referred to his usage in the latter, it would have been only in order to give more point to our condemnation of his usage in the former.

The third item of the defense quite staggers us. We are charged with culpably failing to understand and to report aright our author's views, because he is able to bring forward a passage where, in giving the various terms that have been employed to designate the two classes, he does not omit *surd* and *sonant* from among them. What can he think of the intelligence or the freedom from prejudice of the audience whom he expects to convince by such a plea as that? We will undertake to bring up half a dozen other passages in which the words *surd* and *sonant* are mentioned as alternative designations — nay, even one or two in which, out of consideration for those who are more accustomed to them, they are directly used, alone, by Professor Müller; yet without detriment to the truth of our charge that he adopts and recommends *hard* and *soft*. Take as example his final summing up of the results of his inquiries at the end of the lecture, where he says, in the old editions, "These I call *hard* letters (*psila*, *tenues*, surd, sharp; *vivâraçvâsâghoshâh*)," and "These I call *soft* letters (*mesa*, *mediæ*, sonant, blunt; *samvâranâdaghoshâh*)." Here, too, we have *surd* and *sonant*, but we are no more taught by our author to use them than to use the long Sanskrit terms, of his own making (for they are to be found in no Sanskrit grammarian), which he superfluously and somewhat pedantically appends to each list of synonyms. And that he himself understands it to be so, is shown by the change he has made later in the text, which now reads, "These I call *surd* letters," etc., and "These I call *sonant* letters," etc., the words *hard* and *soft* having shifted place to within the parenthesis!

If we are not greatly mistaken, the state of the case is

this: Professor Müller, like some other students of philology, finds himself unable longer to resist the force of the arguments against *hard* and *soft*, and is convinced that *surd* and *sonant* are the proper terms to use; but, instead of frankly abandoning the one and accepting the other in their place, he would fain make his readers believe that he has always held and taught as he now wishes he had done. It is a case either of disingenuousness or of remarkable self-deception: there appears to be no third alternative.

Moreover, the conversion is, after all, only a half-way affair. Its effects appear at one and another point; but there has been no thorough reworking of those parts of the lecture which involve the question, with reduction of them to a consistent and satisfactory form. On the contrary, Müller's ideas as to the difference of surd and sonant letters are still crude, confused, and fantastic. The fundamental distinction of intonated and unintonated breath as material of the two classes respectively, he does not quite accept. Repeatedly, he will not allow that the "sonant" letters *are* intonated, but only that they *may be* intonated. He frames an unintelligible theory of *spiritus asper* and *spiritus lenis*, of which the former is our *h*, the latter a something that inheres in soft or sonant letters, and which "we distinctly hear, like a slight bubble, if we listen to the pronunciation of any initial vowel." The contradiction to which we called attention in our former review, as to the possibility of introducing an element of intonation into a mute to make it sonant, is still left unreconciled. Helmholtz, namely, is on one page (ii. 144) quoted with full approval, as saying, "Mediæ are therefore accompanied by the tone of the voice, and this may even [for "may even," read "must"], when they begin a syllable, set in a moment before, and when they end a syllable, continue a moment after the opening of the mouth, because some air may be driven into the closed

cavity of the mouth and support the sound of the vocal chords in the larynx." While later (ii. 158), not having understood, apparently, the meaning of this quotation, Müller says on his own behalf: "Some persons have been so entirely deceived by the term sonant, that they imagined all the so-called sonant letters to be actually pronounced with *tonic vibrations* of the chordæ vocales. This is physically impossible; for if we really tried to intone *p* or *b*, we should either destroy the *p* or *b*, or be suffocated in our attempt at producing voice."

But we are spending too much time upon this subject. We could use up our whole space, if there were call to do so, in pointing out the weaknesses and errors of this lecture on phonetics. It is from beginning to end unsatisfactory. The author has consulted excellent authorities, and worked them up with a commendable degree of industry, but he is wanting in inner light, in penetration and sound criticism. He comes at the subject from the outside, and has never gained that thorough comprehension of the movements that go on in his own mouth without which real insight is impossible. As an example, take the following remarkable statement, inserted in the last edition (ii. 133): "If I could trust my own ear, I should say that this vowel [the "neutral vowel," as found in *but*, *son*, *blood*, *double*] was always pronounced with non-sonant or whispered breath; that it is in fact a breathed, not a voiced, vowel"! Some considerate friend should have saved him from such an exposure of his weakness as an independent observer in phonetics.

Lest it be thought that we judge Professor Müller too hardly with reference to his conversion to the doctrine of *surd* and *sonant* letters, we will refer briefly to another somewhat similar case. The so-called "ding-dong theory" of the origin of language — the theory, namely, which regards each original root as a phonetic type, rung out from the organism of primitive man, when this or

that idea struck him — which has had a limited degree of currency during the past ten years, solely on Müller's authority, is now peremptorily repudiated by its putative father. The latter feels called upon, in his present Preface, to "protest once more against the supposition that the theory on the origin of language, which I explained at the end of my first course, and which I distinctly described as that of Professor Heyse, of Berlin, was ever held by myself." We are compelled to say again: here is either disingenuousness or remarkable self-deception; or, perhaps we ought to add, one of the most extraordinary cases on record, on the part of such a master of style and statement as Müller, of failure to make one's self understood. We defy any person to read the exposition of the theory as given in the first editions, and gain a shadow of an impression that it is not put forward by him as his own. It comes in after this fashion. The author has examined, in an earlier part of his lecture, other current theories, and has rejected them, almost with derision. He then enters at some length into the discussion of certain general questions underlying this special inquiry. Finally, regretting that he has "but a few minutes left" for its solution, he propounds "the last question of all in our science, namely: How can sound express thought? How did roots become the signs of general ideas?" And he proceeds to say, "I shall try to answer as briefly as possible. They . . . . are not interjections, nor are they imitations. They are *phonetic types*. . . . . There is a law which runs through nearly the whole of nature, that everything which is struck rings;" and so on, through the well-known ding-dong exposition. In a marginal note, a little later, he gives credit to Heyse for having propounded the view some years before, but goes on to add further remarks about it, which, equally with the text, appear to show that he himself either arrived at it independently or has made it fully his own. He has to

alter and add to his former expressions very considerably in this edition, in order to give the matter a different aspect; and, after all, it reads but lamely, for here is just where, in the context, an explanation of his own views should come in; and the want of it, and the incongruousness of introducing one more view which he does not hold and cannot recommend to his readers, are distinctly and seriously felt. We do not envy the feelings of those who have been, these few years past, defending this theory as Müller's, and denouncing all who would not accept it from him, when they learn that he himself never had the least faith in it. Sure, never were blindly devoted sectaries more cruelly left in the lurch!

The only other point in our criticism which the author ventures to controvert is our objection to his definition of *wh* as a surd or whispered *w*, instead of a *w* with *h* prefixed. To this he retorts: "Now on a question concerning the correct pronunciation of English, it might seem impertinence in me were I not at once to bow to the authority of the 'North American Review.' Still, the writer might have suspected that on such a point a foreigner would not write at random, and if he had consulted the highest authorities on phonetics in England, and, I believe, in America too, he would have found that they agree with my own description of the two sounds of *w* and *wh*." Then, at the point in the lecture where the matter comes up (ii. 148), he quotes against us, in a marginal note, Ellis and Bell. This is a perfectly fair reply; and if we had laid any particular stress upon the point, or taken a dogmatic and "over-confident" tone with regard to it, we should have to feel thoroughly confuted. But such is not the case; the objection is simply one item out of several contained within the limits of a single sentence; and we added a "we think" to it, for the very purpose of giving it more the aspect of an expression of individual opinion.[1] The true phonetic value of the *wh*,

[1] See above, p. 251.

as is well known to all who have studied English phonology, is greatly controverted; we happen to have a strong conviction on one side, which we take every convenient opportunity of expressing, without intending disrespect to those who differ from us. No single authority is of more weight than Ellis on any subject in this department; but we feel less scruple about disagreeing with him as to this particular point, inasmuch as he (and Bell as well) has what we cannot but regard as a special weakness in respect to labial modifications of vowels and consonants. With one who can hold the initial consonant sound of *dwell*, for example, to be not a *w* with *d* prefixed, but a labially modified *d*, we should not expect to agree in an analysis of the *wh* sound.

This is all that Professor Müller brings up against us; and we humbly submit that it is insufficient evidence on which to ground a charge against us either of too little suspicion or of too great confidence. We earnestly desire, and heartily invite, a continuation of his exposures. We should be glad, for example, to see him defend his explanation of the phenomena stated in "Grimm's Law"[1] — an explanation which, so far as we have observed, has found favor with no other philologist, although several have taken the very unnecessary trouble to examine and reject it. We should like, again, to have him try to prove that any one of the three impossible assumptions which we pointed out[2] as involved in his argument respecting the "names for fir, oak, and beech" does not vitiate that argument. We confess, our "unsuspecting" nature had led us to suppose that his expression of perfect readiness to see his own reasoning in the matter refuted was not a mere rhetorical flourish. Once more, we wish that he would establish on a firm foundation his other great argument proving that ideas cannot exist without words; we were, we must say, not a little astonished to

[1] See above, p. 253 *seq.*

[2] Above, p. 256 *seq.*

see it repeated without a word of change in this edition. As it is thus renewedly put forward by its author, and as our protest against it[1] is condemned by being unheeded, we are inclined to submit it here to a more detailed and careful examination.

Professor Müller (ii. 78) states his aim and design thus: "It may be possible, however, by another kind of argument, less metaphysical perhaps, but more convincing, to show clearly that reason cannot become real without speech;" in other terms, as the context, both before and after, plainly shows, that there can be no conceptions, thoughts, reasonings, save in and by articulate expression. A doctrine, truly, of the most fundamental importance in both linguistic and mental philosophy, and one of which the demonstration, made convincingly and without metaphysical subtleties, so clearly that even a plain man can see it, will be in the highest degree welcome. Now begins the demonstration: "Let us take any word, for instance, *experiment*." It is taken; and then the author, as is very much his wont, runs off into an uncalled-for exposition of its etymology. "It is derived from *experior*. *Perior*, like *perân*, would mean to go through. *Perītus* is a man who has gone through many things; *perîculum*, something to go through, a danger. *Experior* is to go through and come out (the Sanskrit, *vyutpad*); hence *experience* and *experiment*. The Gothic *faran*, the English *to fare*, are the same words as *perân*; hence the German *Erfahrung*, experience, and *Gefahr*, periculum; *Wohlfahrt*, welfare, the Greek *euporía*." Very interesting, doubtless; but what has it to do with the argument? It seems almost as if the author were afraid of the latter, and wanted to break the concentration of our attention upon it by a little harmless by-play. "As long, then, as the word experiment expresses this more or less general idea, it has a real existence." Why

[1] Above, p. 248.

"then"? Was there, after all, an argument covered up in the etymological exposition, and is this a logical inference from it? Would not the word have a real existence if it should come to express some other idea, and one that was neither more general nor less general? And what constitutes the "real existence" of a word? This last question, however, will find its answer further on. "But take the mere sound, and change only the accent, and we get *experiment*, and this is nothing. Change one vowel or one consonant, *exporiment* or *esperiment*, and we have mere noises, what Heraclitus would call a mere *psóphos*, but no words." That is to say, a particle of mispronunciation takes the life out of a word, reducing it to a nonentity. But, after all, this nonentity is a relative matter, and a word may be both existent and non-existent at the same time. For Professor Müller continues: "*Cháracter*, with the accent on the first syllable, has a meaning in English, but none in German or French; *charácter*, with the accent on the second syllable, has a meaning in German, but none in English or French; *charactère*, with the accent on the last, has a meaning in French, but none in English or German." It appears, then, that having an existence and having a meaning are equivalent and convertible phrases. "It matters not whether the sound is articulate or not; articulate sound without meaning is even more unreal than inarticulate sound." What is the sense of this? Is it the language of calm and intelligent reasoning, or mere rhetorical talk? Surely, one sound, or one kind of sound, is just as real as another, when it is produced; its being articulate is no bar to its reality. Possibly the glimmer of significance in the statement, which has seduced our author into making it, is that we feel a greater sense of disappointment when we hear articulate sounds to which we can attach no meaning, than when we hear inarticulate sounds, from which we expect no intelligible meaning. But what is the actual intent of

the expression that a word "exists" in one language, and not in others? Plainly this, that it is intelligible to one who has learned that language, but not to others. If I have learned English, German, and French, all the three forms of *character* are equally "existent" to me, each in its proper place and connection. I articulate a sentence of Latin or Greek in the ears of one man, and it is to him "even more unreal than inarticulate sound." In the ears of another, it is as "real" as *experiment* and *character* when uttered in the most unexceptionably orthodox manner; and that, too, although every word in it may involve mispronunciations vastly worse than *experiment* or *exporiment*, mispronunciations which would render it unintelligible, and therefore non-existent, to the Romans or Greeks of the olden time. The seat of the non-existence of a word, then, may queerly enough lie, not in the word itself, but in the degree and kind of the instruction of its hearer.

In short, in all Professor Müller's reasonings, here as well as elsewhere in his works, there is a radical failure to understand what a word really is. A word is a combination of sounds which, by a series of historical reasons (whether beginning ultimately in a natural reason or not we need not here discuss), has come to be accepted and understood in a certain community as the sign of a certain idea. As long as they so accept and understand it, it has existence; when every one ceases to use and understand it, it ceases to exist; and nothing else can kill it. No change of form in a word takes the life out of it, provided it be used by one party and understood by another as the sign of an idea. I may pronounce *experiment* as correctly as possible, and yet kill it by addressing it to a Hottentot or Chinaman, or by using it to signify a troop of horse or the British Constitution. On the other hand, I may mutilate it as I please or can — as young children or uninstructed persons often do — yet without damage to its

existence, if I keep within the bounds of intelligibility. Most people in New England, we believe, say *vágary* instead of *vagáry*, yet the word lives. Many people through the whole English speaking community say *álly*, instead of *allý*, yet the word lives. An excellent friend of ours always speaks of an idiot as an *imbē'cīle*, yet we never observed a blank in his sentences where the word came in. No one who, like Professor Müller, ignores and denies this dependence of our expression upon a mutual understanding between speaker and hearer — in other words, its conventional character — can claim that he understands what language is, or can avoid being drawn respecting it into unfounded reasonings and empty speculations.

So much for our author's facts; now for his conclusions from them. The problem is to convince us how, a word being the accepted sign of an idea, there can be no idea without a word; and the solution is this: "If, then, these articulate sounds, or what we may call the body of language, exist nowhere, have no independent reality, what follows? I think it follows that this so-called body of language could never have been taken up anywhere by itself, and added to our conceptions from without." That is to say (since it has appeared above that existence and significance are the same thing, so far as words are concerned), because there are no significant words except such as have significance, there never can have been a time when they arrived at their significance. Because such combinations of sounds as *experiment* and *character* do not lie around, or fly about, of themselves, waiting for an idea to which they can be fitted, they can never have been devised and applied to ideas. Because *photograph* was non-existent until the art of making the sunlight draw pictures was invented, it cannot have been gotten hold of to designate the conception of something drawn by the sunlight. But there is a further consequence:

"From which it would follow again that our conceptions, which are now always clothed in the garment of language, could never have existed in a naked state. This would be perfectly correct reasoning, if applied to anything else; nor do I see that it can be objected to as bearing on thought and language." Here is more figurative phraseology, of garments and nakedness, with which our author hides from his own eyes the emptiness of his thought. It would equally follow that, as our conception of a photograph is now always signified by that name, the thing could never have been conceived without the name. We maintain instead, that, as such reasoning is incorrect when applied to anything else, it cannot be valid as bearing on language. There are many human beings, also, whom we never see otherwise than clad, but we do not infer that they never can have existed in a naked state. It is and has always been men's custom to give names to things or conceptions when they are found, or made, or won by abstraction, not to make names for things not yet known. And by this means every new-found idea gets its designation, and the increase of knowledge and the growth of language go on together. If Müller's reasonings were correct, there could be no further increase of either. There are in the English language, for example, just so many existent words and no more; and each word is appropriated to expressing some "more or less general idea," or some more or less limited number of such: no more ideas can come into being, because they are unable to exist in a naked state, and all the clothes are sold and in wearing; and there is no provision for more clothes, since the material of such is even more non-existent than inarticulate noises — and that is the end of the matter, unfortunately. But, to our author's apprehension, there is yet another logical fallacy in his reasoning, which might have escaped our notice, if he had not himself been kind enough to point it out by an added illustration. "If we

never find skins except as the teguments of animals, we may safely conclude that animals cannot exist without skins"! We have heard an eminent teacher of logic say that he was accustomed to quote this to his class as a choice example of a false syllogism. Of course, what is true of skins is true of other parts of the animal economy — say horns, or tails. "If we never find tails except as the appendages of animals, we may safely conclude that animals cannot exist without tails." Besides, accepting both the premises and conclusion, we should have to allow that apples and potatoes, for example, are animals; and that jelly-fishes and oysters, among others, are not. We prefer to reject both, in the illustration as in the main argument.

Let no one accuse us of dwelling at unnecessary length upon the examination and refutation of this singular paragraph. There are, as Professor Müller himself says in one of his criticisms, mistakes and mistakes; some that are oversights, results of haste and heedlessness, or of trust in unsound authorities, and that should be passed over lightly; others that come from the very depths of an author's character, and are inexcusable. And we hold that this one is of the latter class. It involves erroneous views which lie at the very basis of linguistic philosophy and make the whole structure unsound; and it exposes a want of logical power, of seeing what is proved by what, that is in greater or less degree apparent in all this author's work. No one can set out with such a flourish of trumpets to prove so important a doctrine, and then make of the proof so lamentable (not to say ridiculous) a failure — no one can write that paragraph, and deliver it, and print it, with correction and revise, and review and pass it in edition after edition down to the sixth, after having his attention called to it as unsound — no one, we say, can do all this, and yet have the right to be regarded as a trustworthy authority in matters of language. Mül-

ler has doubtless done admirable service to the cause of linguistics by spreading information respecting it, and awakening a degree of appreciation and love of it through a very large class of readers: but it admits of question how nearly equal an amount of harm he has done by inculcating false views and obstructing better light; and, at any rate, the latter kind of influence tends more and more to preponderate over the other. If we did not feel this, and feel it strongly, we should be very slow to write of him as we have done here, and elsewhere.

IX.

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE QUESTION AS TO THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE.

IT is far from being my purpose in this paper to enter seriously into the discussion of the origin of language, in the way either of putting forward a theory of my own, or of controverting those which have been put forward by others. I do not wish to open at this time before the Association[1] so vast and uncontrollable a subject. No theme in linguistic science is more often and more voluminously treated than this, and by scholars of every grade and tendency; nor any, it may be added, with less profitable result in proportion to the labor expended; the greater part of what is said and written upon it is mere windy talk, the assertion of subjective views which commend themselves to no mind save the one that produces them, and which are apt to be offered with a confidence, and defended with a tenacity, that are in inverse ratio to their acceptableness. This has given the whole question a bad repute among sober-minded philologists — insomuch that, for example, the recently established French association of kindred object with our own (the Société de Linguistique) forbids by its fundamental law any introduction of the origin of language into its transactions and debates. The prohibition, however, has not

[1] The American Philological Association, at its annual meeting in Rochester, N. Y., in July, 1870.

worked unexceptionably well; for there is no similar society a larger part of whose members have rushed into print upon the subject before the general public; so that one may conjecture that if they had been permitted to fight the fight out more among themselves, the community outside would have been the gainer: and hence, we need not feel bound by their example.

The reason of this irreconcilable discordance and regretable waste of activity appears to be that no common basis of discussion is yet established. The question of the origin of language is not one of facts, to be settled by direct evidence, like the question of relationship of a dialect, or of the genesis of a form; it does not belong to comparative philology, but to linguistic philosophy, all whose fundamental doctrines are involved in its solution. And it will be readily settled (so far as it is capable of being settled at all) when the grand principles of linguistic philosophy are placed upon a firm basis, when it is no longer the case that even scholars of the highest rank are disagreed as to such points as the nature of language and its relations to the mind and to thought (the old dispute as to φύσει or θέσει), and the relation of human expression to that of the lower animals.

My intention here, then, is merely to review briefly the present aspects of the discussion, and to endeavor to straiten its field a little, by directing attention to points that deserve to be regarded as settled, and pointing out directions in which further effort will be likely to lead soonest to valuable result.

And, in the first place, it may be premised that the question of the origin of language is a purely scientific question, and a legitimate one, and that its investigation is to be carried on by strictly scientific means and methods. There ought to be no need of putting forth this claim, still less of insisting upon it; yet, as things are, it requires to be made and urged. A scientific

treatment implies that the known and recorded facts of human language, in combination with known and observable characteristics of human nature, be made the sole basis of the inquiry, and be examined with thoroughness and without prejudice, till they have been forced to yield the utmost result that they are capable of furnishing. This, on the one hand, excludes the admission as coördinate evidence of all opinion, by whomsoever and at whatsoever time expressed; of all authoritative statement, traditional or other, and on whatsoever authority reported. Nothing but harm and confusion can come from attempting to combine the hints of the Genesis, for example, with the deductions of science, in order to yield a joint conclusion; or from suffering the one to govern or regulate the other. The student of language should not ask whether the course of inference and deduction which he is pursuing is or is not going to bring him to conclusions in accordance with views heretofore held by any. His business is solely to see what language itself has to say of its own origin, and how plainly and unequivocally; whether it gives him a solution of the problem that is certain and must be maintained against all attack, or only furnishes probabilities and limits the range of possible hypotheses. When the scientific work is done, then is the time for comparison with views derived from any other quarter, balancing their respective merit and claim to credence, abandoning the one for the other, or trying how they may be reconciled.

The scientific method requires, on the other hand, that no assumption of a different human nature from that which we see and know be made a factor in the inquiry — that no special faculty, or instinct, either in particular individuals, or races, or generations, be postulated, and charged with the beginnings of intelligent and intelligible utterance. To make such an assumption is equivalent to abandoning the scientific ground entirely,

and is no better than the admission of a miraculous or superhuman agency. If human capacities as they actually are be found, in the last analysis, unequal to the task of producing the germs of a method of communication like ours, then that will be the scientific result of the investigation, and the field of conjecture will be thrown open to whoever may desire to enter it; but he is no scientific inquirer who uses such materials in his investigation itself.[1]

In the second place, if we would make our contributions to this discussion tell upon its result, we need to draw the line distinctly between the historical and the theoretical sides of the question — or, what is nearly the same thing, between what has already been done and what yet remains to do. Historical investigation takes us from the present condition of language a long way back toward the beginning, but it does not and never can take us the whole way. In the very nature of things, it cannot show us why the first speakers used this and that

[1] I need hardly explain that I allude here to the assumption which F. M. Müller has made a part of his so-called "ding-dong theory" of the origin of language — his assumption of "an instinct, an instinct of the mind as irresistible as any other instinct," which, after it had given "to each conception, as it thrilled for the first time through the brain, a phonetic expression, became extinct when its purpose was fulfilled." It is, indeed, possible to put this doctrine in such a form as to give a scientific *status*. If the claim were made that a faculty and disposition to direct expression of thought and the production of "phonetic types" forms a part of universal human nature, and would show itself and work its legitimate results in every individual if its action were not anticipated by the learning from others of already formed and developed speech — that, indeed, would be worth discussing and testing by careful inductive processes, by examination of the facts of human history and the history of speech. But Müller, with his followers (if in this particular doctrine he has any followers), does not explain himself thus, or show any indications of meaning thus; in his view, that this faculty was "peculiar to man in his primitive state" "must be accepted as an ultimate fact"; no other reason is alleged than that "that faculty must have existed in man, because its effects continue to exist" — which is a palpable begging of the question, a taking for granted, without argument, that language *is* its effect and could have been the effect of nothing else: that is to say, it must have existed because it must have existed.

[More recently, it should be added, Müller has stood from under this theory and left it without any visible support: see the preceding essay (p. 268 *seq.*).]

sign for this and that idea; and practically, it cannot show us that they did use this and that sign at all. There is no prospect that we shall ever be able to say "*these* are the very first utterances of speaking men; now let us see how they originated." We come nearest to such a result, doubtless, in the Indo-European family; yet, even there, we can only assert the use of certain elements in certain senses before the break up of the family into its independent branches; of the absolute primitiveness of any of these elements we have and can have no assurance. In most or all of the other families we cannot even go so far as this — whence the worthlessness of the attempted comparisons of roots between the different families. The grand conclusion, however, at which historical study has surely and incontrovertibly arrived, is that all the grammatical apparatus of languages is of secondary growth; that the endings of declension and conjugation, the prefixes and suffixes of derivation, were originally independent elements, words, which were first collocated with other words, and then entered into combination and were more or less thoroughly fused with the latter, losing their primitive form and meaning, and becoming mere signs of modification and relation; hence, that the historically traceable beginnings of speech were simple roots; not parts of speech, even, and still less forms. That these roots, moreover, signified external, sensible, physical acts and qualities; precisely what ones, we cannot yet tell, and shall perhaps never be able to tell; but this, in its bearing on the question of origin, is of no great consequence. All that there is left to explain, then, is, how such roots as these should have come into being and use. And this amounts to a wonderful simplification of the question of origin; did we not see that primitive speech was thus widely different from the developed discourse of historical epochs, we should give up our inquiries in despair, and acknowledge that only mi-

raculous power could have been equal to the origination of language.

It would be unfair to claim that the accordance of students of language in this doctrine is absolute. There is here and there an ultra conservative, who will believe only so far as he is forced by unequivocal testimony, and, while he confesses the later formative elements of speech to be wrought out of independent words, refuses to infer that the older are of the same character, preferring to hold that there was some mysterious and inscrutable difference between the ancient and modern tongues as regards their principle of growth: and we even meet occasionally with a man who has done good service and won repute in some department of philology, and who yet commits the anachronism of believing that endings and suffixes sprouted out of roots by an internal force. But these are men with whom it is vain to reason; they must be left to their idiosyncrasies, and not counted in as bearing a share in the progress of modern linguistic science. There are also, of course, many whose studies in language have not gone far enough to show them the logical necessity of the views we have described; but they, too, are to be reckoned as in the rear of the present movement. He who sets himself seriously to examine or to demonstrate the theory of roots as the historical germs of speech will be accounted as one who threshes straw; he who does not make that theory the basis of his further inquiries into the origin of language must not expect even to obtain a hearing from scholars.

Upon this basis of historically determined fact whatever further truths are raised must be won by processes of another sort. Strict induction from determinate items of knowledge is no longer applicable; its place is taken by inference from general views and theoretical conditions — these views and conditions being themselves, of course, not arbitrarily assumed, but derived by inductive

process from the known facts of language and human history. It is here, accordingly, that there begins to be wide discordance among even the best scholars and deepest reasoners; a discordance that is sometimes implicit and unacknowledged, sometimes clear and outspoken. And it is highly desirable that the efforts of those who would advance the science of language be brought to bear directly upon some of these points of discordance, whose settlement ought to be already within reach, and would be of decisive influence upon that of the ultimate question which we are considering.

Thus, what difference can reach deeper, or be of wider bearing, than that which prevails with reference to the nature of the relation between language and thought? One party contends, either impliedly or formally, that there is an actual identity between speech, on the one hand, and thought, mind, reason, on the other; that language is not only a sign of reason, but its very substance; that thought without expression is an impossibility; that the formation of an abstract idea depends entirely upon its name — and so on. This doctrine finds probably its extreme expression in the assertion that a deaf mute is destitute of reason, and does not become possessed of it until he learns a mode of expression from the reasonable beings about him. The other side maintains that language is only the assistant of reason and the instrument of thought; that reason is the indefeasible endowment of humanity, and thought the action of human minds; that they need, in order to their full development and proper working, an auxiliary like speech, and have proved able to provide themselves with it; that, even had men been deprived of voice, they would have made available some other instrumentality for the same purpose; that he whose want of hearing cuts him off from this particular mode of expression is still a man, with all the essential characteristics of humanity, which merely

require to be developed and educated by a less usual and less convenient instrumentality; that, were a generation of infants to grow up untaught to speak, they would from the beginning be possessed of reason no less than ourselves, and that their reason would at once begin a course of training analogous with that through which the human race has already passed, one of the essential steps in this course being the production and use of speech. When we come down to smaller details, the one side hold that the idea without the word is an impossibility, and that no conception can exist till there is provided a name for it; the other, that the idea or conception always precedes in time, and must precede, the name; that signs are made in order to be applied to ideas which the mind has formed and seeks to express; that the whole process of language-making, from the beginning of time, has been only a process of names-giving which has followed close upon the growth of knowledge and conscious thought, mastering and making manageable and communicable whatever bit of valuable mental wealth has been wrought out by experience.

Men who hold these two so diverse sets of opinions cannot be expected to agree with one another in their views of the origin of speech. And he who should address himself successfully to this one subject, should point out the errors and misapprehensions involved in the one or the other theory, or in both, in a convincing manner, so as to lead the way to a mutual understanding and agreement, would, in my opinion, render the very greatest service that can be rendered to the question of origin. Most of those who undertake the latter directly do not treat the other with fullness, or at all; they simply let their discordant views upon it appear, as if the matter were too plain and elementary to call for discussion; or they dispose of the opposing opinion with an absurd misrepresentation or unfair fling. Thus, nothing is more common

than that those who hold the former of the two sets of opinions described above should make easy work of vanquishing their opponents by simply assuming the latter to maintain that men work out a whole series of new ideas, and then, by an afterthought, set themselves at work to devise and apply appellations for them; or, they attempt to confute the idea of the "conventionality" of spoken signs for thought by showing the laughable absurdity of a gathering or "convention" of speechless men, discussing and voting the adoption of spoken designations — as if the term "conventional," in any of its uses, ever implied any such convention! Indeed, so customary is this sort of unfairness, that I may truly say I have never seen the controversy conducted otherwise by the party referred to, or the opposing views squarely met and argued against, in the form in which their present supporters would put them.

Another point of first-rate importance, whose solution is to a great extent bound up in the result of the controversy which we just have been considering, is this: should the first impulse to speech have come from within, or from without? were words pushed out by a longing after expression, for the sake of the benefit and relief afforded thereby to the individual's own mind, or were they drawn forth by the desire to communicate, to make known to another what lay in the utterer's thought? were they framed as the means of expression pure and simple, or of communication? This also is a point which is apt either to be overlooked altogether by inquirers into the origin of language, or to be carelessly and insufficiently treated by them. Yet its decisive bearing upon the question is evident. Its settlement one way or the other involves a complete diversity in the essential character of the first utterances, the germs of after development. On the one hand, we should have to seek in these some internal and necessary tie between the conception and its sign, naturally

inherent in the latter, and determining its assignment to its office. On the other, no such tie would be implied, any more than between idea and sign in the later stages of language, and the only adaptedness in the sign would be its adaptedness to be readily understood by the being to whom it was addressed. The first framers of speech would be regarded as standing toward one another in a position essentially the same with that of two persons of wholly different language who should meet at the present time and desire to hold communication together: all the resources of imitative expression would be laid under requisition by them — grimace, gesture, posture, imitative utterance, whether onomatopoetic or exclamatory, symbolical utterance, so far as in this there was power of suggesting an intended meaning. The process of mutual understanding would be a tentative one, every imagined expedient being tried, and adopted if it proved successful; and ere long a foundation would be laid which would admit of rapid and indefinite expansion. We must not overlook, of course, the great differences between this imagined case and that of the primitive language-makers: where two beings with developed powers of thought and expression, and with formed habits of speech, came together, their progress would be indefinitely greater, and the process would soon become one of learning one another's speech, and framing a common dialect out of the mixture of the two (doubtless with great preponderance of the one over the other); but where the two were before speechless, and that command of the mental powers and dexterity in wielding them which language gives had to be acquired step by step along with and by the production of language, the process would be laboriously slow, and generations instead of days or weeks would be needed to mark the stages of its advance. And yet, in both cases the initial steps would be parallel and essentially alike. That is to say, the recognition of communication as the

primary and ultimate object of speech involves as its necessary consequence an acceptance of the "imitative" theory of the origin of speech;[1] nor, on the other hand, can this theory be established independently of such recognition; the two doctrines must stand or fall together. Into any detailed discussion of their truth, it is not the purpose of this paper to enter. I would only point out one or two difficult implications which seem to be made in the opposing view.

One of these is, that the solitary man would have the same inducement to produce a language as the member of a family or a society. If words are made because the individual feels or knows that the possession and use of such signs will help his consciousness to gain command of the processes of mental action, will render orderly and consecutive thought possible to him, will be to his reason what the tools he invents are to his hands, then the whole efficient force and its occasion of action are within the individual, and society adds only a means of perpetuating what he originates for his private benefit. And it needs to be inquired whether what we know of solitary human beings, or of those who by some special local deficiency are cut off from the usual avenues of communication with their fellows, and whether what we see of the relation of society to language during the recorded history of its growth and employment, are in accordance with this view.

Again, a questionable degree of forecast, of comprehension of what would make for his advantage in the development of his capacities, is thus attributed to primitive man. That human beings at even the lowest stage of existence are accessible to inducements founded in their social nature, no one will think of denying; but that they

[1] The theory, namely, which some have unauthorizedly divided into an onomatopoetic and an interjectional theory, but which in fact includes both these, and more beside. See Wedgwood's *Origin of Language*, and the writer's *Language and Study of Language*, eleventh lecture.

are capable of anticipative pleasure in the "projection of their thought outside of themselves," in setting it forth as an object of contemplation by themselves, is vastly more doubtful. Experience, and only experience, it would seem, is capable of making the individual realize the advantage and take pleasure in the exercise — if, indeed, the realization comes at all until a considerable degree of culture is reached, and if, in all the early stages of development, men do not, so far as they themselves know and are conscious, talk solely for the sake of intercourse with others. Thus it was with the history of writing, an art that stands only second to that of speaking in its bearing upon the culture of the individual and the advancement of the race; it was not devised as a means of culture and advancement, but as a means of communication merely; and all the advantages which it has in the former respect also have been attained unconsciously, without being anticipated or aimed at.[1] Thus it has been, too, with the invention of instruments. The instinct to contrive and use such aids to his physical powers is not a whit less distinctively characteristic of man than the instinct of speech; but the earliest human beings did not sit down to satisfy that instinct by exercising their inventive capacity; they provided for each special practical exigency that arose, by such means as were readiest at hand, and could best be made available; and so they have advanced from clubs and stones to power-looms, steam-engines, and telegraphs, as in language from the rudest signs of thought to such intricate and perfected instrumentalities as Sanskrit, Greek, and English. This is the usual and normal way in which the latent and unsuspected capacities of human nature are drawn out by the pressure of external circumstances and trained by experience; and if the history of

[1] The analogy in this respect between speaking and writing, an analogy pregnant with meaning and instruction, has been more fully set forth in the author's *Language and the Study of Language*, lecture twelfth.

language has been different, the burden of proving it so devolves upon those who hold the doctrine.

These are, if I am not mistaken, the most effective tests by which the work of every investigator of the origin of language may be tried. If he mingles authoritative statements, from whatever quarter, with his inductive reasonings, or fails to recognize the results of historical linguistics in the establishment of the initial radical stage of language, he is out of harmony with the whole present condition and spirit of linguistic science, and cannot expect to command the attention of scholars. If respecting the relation of language to thought, the order of genesis of the conception and its sign, and the nature of the primary impulse to utterance, he does not hold definite opinions and defend them by solid arguments, or if he passes lightly over these questions as of subordinate consequence, he will add little or nothing that is valuable to the enormous and constantly increasing mass of disquisition and discussion of the subject — and, in conclusion, it may be claimed that, if he takes the wrong side of these questions, he will never reach a sound and defensible theory. A theory, what we hold respecting the origin of language must always remain, since (as has been already pointed out) direct inductive reasoning cannot reach so far back in the history of language; but the elements of uncertainty in it may, with right views and a sound method, be reduced within very narrow limits.

X.

DR. BLEEK AND THE SIMIOUS THEORY OF LANGUAGE.[1]

THIS little work is written with much apparent profundity, but it seems to be one of a class, not quite unknown in German literature, in which a minimum of valuable truth is wrapped up in a maximum of sounding phraseology. Its author is well known amongst students of language as a man of great erudition and great industry, and his contributions to South African philology have been extensive and important. He has never kept himself within the strict limits of his special department; his mental enterprise and fondness for generalizing have exercised themselves in various and wide-reaching speculations and combinations; but here his success is far from being assured, and it is doubtful whether much of his work will stand criticism. In the discussion of a question like that of the origin of language, a great deal of clear thought, of sound logic tempered and guided by sober sense, and of cautious reserve, is required — qualities which, to say the least, are not the special characteristics of his mind. We do not feel tempted to yield our opinions either to his guidance or to that of his cousin and editor, Professor Häckel of Jena, who also has a good deal to

[1] *On the Origin of Language.* By W. H. J. Bleek, etc. Edited with a Preface by Dr. Ernst Häckel, etc. Translated by Thomas Davidson. New York. 1869. 8vo. Pp. 69.

say within the same covers. The latter gentleman, particularly, appears to be one of those headlong Darwinians who take the whole process of development by natural selection as already proved and unquestionable, and go on with the fullest and most provoking confidence to draw out its details. Thus, in a note (not of his own appending, but introduced by Dr. Bleek), he is kind enough to sketch the whole common genealogical tree of man and the monkeys and apes, showing us the gorilla, the chimpanzee, and their like, on a level at the ends of the topmost branches, and enabling us to read off the exact degree of our consanguinity with each individual group of the *quadrumana*, sharp-nosed or flat-nosed, tailed or tailless. Now we, for one, must confess that we have not a particle of prejudice against such kindred; we are democratic enough to think a *parvenu* quite as good as a man with innumerable quarterings, and to hold, with Mephistopheles, that "we are, after all — what we are," no matter how we came to be so, whether by a long and tedious climb upward from a miserable semi-simious state, or by a briefer slide downward from a condition of paradisiacal purity and intuitive wisdom. In fact, we must allow the justness of the claim urged by our authors, that the former account of our position is the more flattering and gratifying of the two. Who would not belong to a race whose career is steadily upward, rather than to one which has once made an awful lapse, and may probably enough repeat it? Further, we have great faith in the substantial truth of the central Darwinian idea, and would no more regard the analogies and correspondences of form among different kinds and races as meaningless sports of nature, than the fossils in the rocks, which used to be interpreted as such — and are still by many, from whose knowledge and spirit those of the scientific and half-scientific denouncers of Darwin are not perhaps so far removed as they imagine. But we cannot think the

theory yet converted into a scientific fact; and those are perhaps the worst foes to its success who are over-hasty to take it and use it as a proved fact. Nor have we patience with men who, inspired by it, claim to be wise respecting man's grand and great-grand ancestors to a degree far beyond what is yet written in the book of science.

The eminent linguistic scholar Schleicher was also sorely infected with Darwinism, and sought to bring the science of language into relation with it in a couple of noted essays,[1] which are far the weakest and most valueless of all his productions, though here referred to with high approval by his colleague Häckel; and it is part of Dr. Bleek's aim, as well, to connect the development of speech with this particular mode of the development of our race — although we hardly see how he would bring it about, since his theories seem to require only that man should have been, at some indefinite epoch in the past, a creature without language. But his course of exposition is not of the clearest; and, either by his own fault or his translator's, his expression is also often awkward and confusing, especially on the first pages. The introduction to his specific theory occupies two thirds of the pamphlet (forty-six pages out of sixty-nine), and in the course of it he brings forward many views to which it is very difficult to yield assent. For example, he claims that the language of the mute animals bears to human speech nearly the same relation as the Chinese mode of printing from solid blocks bears to our own from movable types. Surely a most unfortunate and misleading comparison, and one which reduces indefinitely, we might fairly say infinitely, the real difference of the two modes of communication. Animal speech is vastly further removed from ours than even the rudest picture-writing from our perfected alphabets, written and printed. Dr. Bleek's opinion on this

[1] See the next essay (below, p. 298 *seq.*).

point doubtless stands connected with his idea, dimly shadowed forth here and there, that articulate speech is distinguished from inarticulate by being broken up and mobilized — which seems to us wholly meaningless. Again, he claims that the personification of natural phenomena, and the development of a nature-religion, has "its origin in the sexual form of language" — that is to say, grows out of the classification which some languages (all those with which we are most familiar) make of objects as masculine or feminine; and he proceeds later to connect poetry and science with the same linguistic peculiarity. The extent to which he is under the dominion of this opinion may be gathered from the fact that, on finding a worship of the sun and moon among certain American tribes, while the American tongues have no grammatical gender, he is ready at once to assume the derivation of a part of the culture or the speech of America from nations in the Old World who said *he* and *she*! Indeed, so arbitrary and unsound are his reasonings on matters of religious history, that when, in the sequel, he comes to make himself as offensive to "theologians" as he possibly can, they will feel justified in regarding his denunciation and contempt as of very small account.

When we arrive at last at the theory proper, we find it to be of a quite peculiar character. It is somewhat as follows: The earliest quasi-human beings uttered by mere instinct certain sounds to express certain feelings. They heard their fellows utter the same sounds. Being, like monkeys, of an imitative disposition, they could not help mocking these sounds. But, upon thus reproducing them, they were reminded of the feelings which had prompted their own original utterances. This gave them, side by side, a view of the feeling and its natural expression, an apprehension of a sign and something signified, and so brought before their consciousness the separateness and the connection of the two; it set the feeling outside

of them as an object of contemplation, and gave them knowledge of that item of themselves. This was the first step in the process whereby man became man.

This theory is unnecessarily complicated. So far as there are involuntary utterances expressive of feeling (and their range is very limited), they did not need to be repeated by imitation before they could be associated with an idea of the feeling that led to them. Why could not that association follow upon their being heard simply from others' mouths, or even from one's own? Would not the most rudimentary man *in posse*, if he heard his fellow laugh or cry, understand what it meant without having first himself to *haw-haw* or *boo-hoo?* Do not even the animals thus? When a gun goes off, all the shy birds near by take to flight without waiting to say "bang!" to themselves. The imitative factor is an intrusion, and may be left out of the account altogether. If the first man had not had a power of analytic apprehension, and a mastery over consciousness, very different from those of other beings, neither hearing nor imitation would have led him to anything. This power is man's characteristic, and where he received it, at whatever time and in whatever way, he became man. We object entirely to having his conversion into man treated as the result, rather than the cause, of his cultural development as man. When the process of language-making began, man was man *in esse* as well as *in posse*, ready to have his powers drawn out and educated — just as is every human being nowadays at the commencement of its existence. And the specific moving power to the working-out of speech was not the monkeyish tendency to imitation, but the human tendency to sociality, the desire of communication with one's fellows — an element which Dr. Bleek appears not to have taken at all into consideration.

He is, further, consistently in the wrong in his view

of the relation of language to thought. He holds the extreme opinion as to the absolute necessity of a word to an idea, asserting that "no cognition can come into man's consciousness otherwise than in and through language," and more to the same purpose. Here is no place to enter upon the often repeated discussion of this fundamental point; but we may say that we do not see what sound and telling argument can possibly be urged upon Dr. Bleek's side. Like many another before him, he mistakes one kind and degree of indispensability for another. Because, on the grand scale, language is the necessary auxiliary of thought, indispensable to the development of the power of thinking, to the distinctness and variety and complexity of cognitions, to the full mastery of consciousness, therefore he would fain make thought absolutely impossible without speech, identifying the faculty with its instrument. He might just as reasonably assert that the human hand cannot act without a tool. With such a doctrine to start from, he cannot stop short of Müller's worst paradoxes, that an infant (*in-fans*, 'not speaking') is not a human being, and that deaf-mutes do not become possessed of reason until they learn to twist their fingers into imitations of spoken words.

Of course, we cannot believe that a man who goes so far astray upon points of so capital consequence is capable of casting valuable light upon the origin of language; and we are forced to regard the present essay as a failure. So far as we can discover, it does not add an item of valuable information or valuable thought to the discussion of the subject; and neither its substance, nor its style, nor its spirit furnishes reason for its translation into English.

XI.

SCHLEICHER AND THE PHYSICAL THEORY OF LANGUAGE.

THE name of August Schleicher cannot be uttered by any student of comparative philology of the present generation without respect and admiration. Especially now, when the memory of his early and lamented death is so recent, no one can desire to remember aught of him save his immense industry and erudition, his ardor in the pursuit of the science to which his life was devoted, his critical acuteness, his liberal and independent spirit, his love of freedom, and the many other excellences of his character as man and as scholar. His part in the development of the historical study of language was no unimportant one. His manual of Indo-European comparative grammar[1] has been the convenient and instructive text-book out of which many, in various lands, have drawn a knowledge and love of the subject; and, being now in process of translation into English, its usefulness among English speakers will soon be largely increased. If I, then, take the liberty to criticise and combat in this paper some of his fundamental views of language, I do it with no abatement of due respect to him, but because he stands forth as a very conspicuous representative of what I cannot but think a false and hurtful tendency in a part of modern linguistic science; and because his great

[1] *Compendium der vergleichenden Grammatik der Indogermanischen Sprachen.* Third edition, Weimar, 1870.

and deserved reputation as a philologist, a comparative student of the facts of language and their concrete relations, gives a dangerous importance to his opinions as a glossologist, or student of the theory and philosophy of language. There is, unfortunately, no necessary connection between eminence in one of these characters and in the other; many a great comparative philologist has either left untouched the principles and laws underlying the phenomena with which he deals, or has held respecting them views wholly superficial, or even preposterous and absurd. This state of things is one which marks the formative period of a science; there is every reason why it should now come to an end, and why certain fundamental truths, at least, should be accepted as so thoroughly established that he who denies them shall have no right to be seriously reasoned with, and may be simply passed by as a humorist.

The views which I shall here criticise are put forth in two brief pamphlets, both published towards the end of their author's life. The first appeared in 1863, and is entitled "The Darwinian Theory and the Science of Language."[1] It is in the form of an "open letter" to Professor Häckel, the well-known zoölogist, who, by dint of much urging, had persuaded its author to read Darwin on the Origin of Species. The work, once read, had won Schleicher's hearty and unqualified approval; it seemed to him to be simply the natural and inevitable next step forward in zoölogical science — in fact, the analogue of what had been already done in linguistic science; he had himself happened to state just about the same time, and in nearly equivalent terms, in his book on the German language,[2] the same conclusions respecting language

[1] *Die Darwinsche Theorie und die Sprachwissenschaft.* Offenes Sendschreiben an Herrn Dr. Ernst Häckel, a. o. Professor der Zoologie und Director des Zoologischen Museums an der Universität Jena, von Aug. Schleicher. Weimar, 1863. 8vo. Pp. 29.

[2] *Die Deutsche Sprache.* Von August Schleicher. Stuttgart, 1860. 8vo. (Second improved and augmented edition, 1869.)

which Darwin had put forth in attractive form respecting the history of animal life. And he goes on to draw out more fully the parallel between the two sciences, and to make the facts and principles of language demonstrate the truth of Darwinism. Now this parallelism has impressed many minds, and been used once and again, in the way of illustration or of analogical argument, on the one side or the other; but no one, so far as I know, has hitherto attempted to make so much out of it as Professor Schleicher here does — to prove that one species of animals must have descended from another very unlike it, because a modern dialect comes from an exceedingly dissimilar ancient one; and that animals of higher structure must be developed from those of lower, because complicated tongues are derived from monosyllabic roots; and so on. Such reasoning, of course, implies something like a real and substantial identity between an organized being, an animal or plant, on the one hand, and a language on the other. And this identity Schleicher is logical enough, and bold enough, to assume. His fundamental view of language he lays down in these terms (pp. 6, 7): "Languages are natural organisms, which, without being determinable by the will of man, arose, grew, and developed themselves, in accordance with fixed laws, and then again grow old and die out; to them, too, belongs that succession of phenomena which is wont to be termed 'life.' *Glottik*, the science of language, is accordingly a natural science; its method is on the whole and in general the same with that of the other natural sciences."

Here, again, we have statements akin with those which are not seldom made by writers on language, only usually in less definite and categorical shape. Schleicher has put forth the theory of the independent and organic life of language in an extreme form, and has drawn from it extreme consequences, as if in order that we may be provoked to give it a thorough examination, and see whether

it is a valuable guiding truth, or only a delusive figure of speech.

Our author does not attempt any proof of his dogma, or even let us see clearly the grounds on which it rests in his own mind. For aught that appears, he regards it as self-evident, or as sufficiently supported by the further expositions which he makes, and which involve it as an element. This is to be regretted, as imposing additional trouble and perplexity upon one who would fain test, and, if possible, refute the doctrine; since it may remain to a certain extent doubtful whether the considerations which were held to be of the most importance have been after all touched. But Schleicher gives us in his statement two hints which we are justified in taking up and dwelling on, as very probably indicating the grounds of his faith: languages are "not determinable by the will of man," and their growth and change is "according to fixed laws."

Of these two, the former is evidently the more important. If the voluntary action of men has anything to do with making and changing language, then language is so far not a natural organism, but a human product. And if that action is the only force that makes and changes language, then language is not a natural organism at all, nor its study a natural science. Let us, then, look first and especially into this.

If we desire to understand the forces which are at work in language, we must be willing to examine their operations in petty and prosaic detail, not content with standing in admiring awe before their collective result. That language is a glorious thing, a divine gift, a characteristic of human nature, the sign and instrument of our superiority to the brute, and all that, is unquestionably true, and might be indefinitely enlarged upon, if pertinent to the present inquiry. Of somewhat the same character is a Beethoven symphony, a Grecian temple, an Egyptian

pyramid. But if I wish to ascertain whether a certain pyramid is a work of human art, or rather a stupendous natural crystal, indeterminable by the will of man, and developed under the government of the eternal laws of regular solids, I look to see how it is made up in its parts, and whether it is composed of independent stones, bearing the marks of human tools, and apparently fitted together by human hands; I do not stand at a distance and wonder at its regularity and immensity, contrasting these with the feeble powers of the men whom even a climb to its summit now exhausts. That no man can make a language, any more than he can make a pyramid; that no man, unaided, can make any item of language, any more than he can move or set in place one of the stones of the pyramid; that no man, nor any number or generation of men, can affect the present of a language except as they have its past behind them, any more than they can lay the top-stone of a pyramid without having its lower courses beneath them, is all obvious enough; only, so far as I can judge, these and others like them have been the considerations that have led some people to deny human agency in language; — for the equally reasonable purpose of disproving it in the pyramids, I do not remember to have seen them adduced.

Every one acknowledges that languages at the present time, not less than in earlier stages of linguistic history, are in a state of constant change, or "growth," as it is often and properly enough called; and it ought not to be impossible, nor very difficult, to recognize the forces which are effective in producing this growth, and then, by comparing the modes and results of earlier growth, to satisfy one's self whether any other force or set of forces may or must be assumed as causing the latter. Now the difference which separates any given language, modern or ancient, from its predecessor at any distance in the past, is not a single integral thing, but rather the sum

of a great number of particular items; and these items admit of being classified, in order to the better determination of the causes producing them. Let us briefly examine the classes, and see what kind of action they imply.

In the first place, the words of a language come to have a different meaning from that which they had formerly. Of all the modes of change, this is the most insidious and unavoidable in its action, and, in languages circumstanced like our own, the most deep-reaching and important in its effects. Every part and particle of every vocabulary is liable to it. And does it come about by an interior force, working in the substance of the spoken word? Not the least in the world; it is simply a consequence and accompaniment of the growth of men's knowledge, the change of men's conceptions and beliefs and institutions. It is as purely extraneous to language as the fact that the name *John Smith* given to the puling infant is borne also by the tottering old man into whom that infant grows. The world-wide change in the value of *priest*, from the simple 'older person (elder)' that it originally designated to its present sense of 'consecrated (and, in some religions, half-divine) minister of God,' is wholly subordinate to the change of men's ideas as to the character of the official to whom it is applied. The words *faith* and *love*, and *God* itself, are, in the meaning we give them, indexes of the education in point of religion and refinement which our part of the human race has enjoyed. The peculiar American sense of *college*, quite different from the English, is due to the peculiar circumstances which have governed the development of our educational system; just as the names *robin* and *blackbird* have been applied by us, for the sake of convenience and under the government of old associations, to birds essentially unlike, and only superficially like, those to which they belong in the mother country. That the

name of a race, *Slave*, has become in Germanic speech the name of a bondman, has no other foundation than the historical circumstances which made so many Slaves bondmen of the Germans. The peculiar sacredness of association of *home*, the pregnant sense conveyed by *comfort*, have nothing to do with the phonetic texture of those vocables themselves, but are what the habits and feelings of English speakers have endowed them with. *Talent* is a term borrowed from a parable by men who had read and studied the Bible, and is applied, in accordance with the significance of the parable, to designate the treasure of ability which one possesses, as it were by gift of the Creator. And there are hosts of words like *light*, and *heat*, and *earth*, and *sun*, which have been, not indeed changed in outward application, but indefinitely widened and deepened in inner and apprehended significance, by the results of men's study of the universe and its relations.

So is it also with that developed wealth of word and phrase by which intellectual and moral acts, conditions, and relations have come by degrees to be signified. All, as the historical study of language distinctly shows, has been won through the transfer to an ideal use of words and phrases which had before designated something physical and sensible. And the transfer was made in the usage of individuals and communities who saw a resemblance or analogy between the physical act and the mental, and who were ingenious enough to make an application of material already familiar to new and needed uses. Take as examples one or two of the terms we have just been employing: *application* is a 'bending to,' a physical adaptation of one line or surface to another; *transfer* means 'carry across;' *intellectual* comes, by an intricate series of changes, from a verb signifying 'pick among.' What agency other than that of the speakers of language has been at work here? We are

ourselves all the time repeating the same processes in lively phrase. *Circumvent* and *get around* are but one metaphor, in an older and younger form; *comprehend* and *understand* are often familiarly replaced by the nearly equivalent modern phrases *grasp* or *get hold of* and *get to the bottom* (or *into the heart*) *of*, the figurative use of which is certainly a human product.

Once more, that large and conspicuous class of changes by which certain words are reduced from fullness and independence of meaning to the value of connectives, signs of form and relation, equivalents of grammatical terminations, is of the same origin. We trace, for example, the history of *have*, from the time when it signified possession only, to that when it has become in a part of its uses a mere sign of completed action, an "auxiliary" forming a "perfect tense" (as in *I have sat*); and we find no trace of any alterative agency save a slowly changing usage, through which the speakers of English (as of sundry other modern languages), without being conscious of what they were doing, or working reflectively toward an anticipated end, have converted the one thing into the other. So with *of*, which, from being in Anglo-Saxon time a full preposition, the same both in form and meaning with *off*, has now grown into a kind of detached and prefixed genitive ending. So, again, with *to*, once a preposition governing a verbal noun, now an arbitrary "sign of the infinitive," and even convertible and converted, in childish and colloquial phrase, into a representative of that verbal form (as in the common childish retort "no, I don't want *to*"). I have taken as examples some of the latest cases of this change, because, while not less fairly and fully illustrative than any which might be taken from other periods of linguistic growth, they are more directly intelligible in their process. We say sometimes that such words change themselves in people's mouths, without the knowledge of their speakers, but we

know, at the same time, that we are only talking figuratively, in the same way in which we might say that a fashion changes itself, or a law, or a popular opinion.

My illustrations of this immense and varied department of linguistic growth are scanty, but I think that they ought to be sufficient for their purpose. If there is in the whole department anything of a kind essentially different from them, or calling into action other forces than they imply, it has at any rate entirely escaped my quest. Nor am I aware that any student of language has ever attempted to point out anything inconsistent with them. Such alterations are all the time going on in our own speech without any question as to whence they proceed; and the burden of proof evidently rests upon those who claim that in other times they have involved forces of a different character.

A hardly less extensive department is that which includes changes in the forms of words, alteration of their uttered substance — phonetic decay, as it is sometimes loosely called, from the prevailing direction of the movement. I may be briefer in my notice and illustration of this, inasmuch as all authorities are virtually agreed in their attribution of its phenomena to a single prevailing cause — namely, a disposition to economy of effort in utterance. This disposition, felt in human minds and directing the operations of human organs of speech, it is, which in all languages abbreviates long words, wears off endings, gets rid of harsh combinations by assimilation, dissimilation, omission, insertion, compensation, and all the other figures of phonology, changes the tone of vowels and the place and mode of articulation of consonants, brings new alphabetic sounds into existence and lets old ones go into desuetude — and so on, through the whole vast list of modes of phonetic change. The ways in which the tendency works itself out are indefinitely various, depending upon the variety of human cir-

cumstances and human habits, as well as upon preferences and caprices which come up in a community in a manner often strange and unaccountable, though never justly awakening the suspicion of an agency apart from and independent of man. Every word which any one of us has learned to utter he has the power to utter always completely, if he will take the pains; but the same carelessness and haste which bring about the vulgarism *pro'able* and the colloquialism *cap'n*, which make us say *bus* for *omnibus* and *cab* for *cabriolet*, tend to transmute gradually the whole aspect of our speech. When we learn German, we are conscious of a little special effort in pronouncing *Knecht;* and the same feeling, in a less conscious form, converted the almost identical *cniht* of the Anglo-Saxon into our *knight*. The laws of phonetic mutation in speech are in part the laws of the physical relations of articulate sounds; but only in part, for else the phonetic history of all related tongues would be essentially the same: the other great and indeterminable factor in the process is the will of men, in the forms of choice, willingness or aversion to articulating effort, sense for proportion and euphony, conservative tendency or its opposite, and other the like. And this, again, acts under the influence of all the inducements and motives, external and internal, which direct human action in other respects also. There is just as much and just as little that is arbitrary in the action of men on the form of language as in their action on any other of the elements which go to make up the sum of their culture.

There is another form of mental inertia which leads to changes in the constitution of words. Something of exertion is involved in the learning and remembering of apparently irregular forms, like *went* from *go*, or *brought* from *bring*, or *worse* from *bad*, or *feet* from *foot*. If the great majority of past tenses in English are made by adding *ed*, of comparatives by *er*, of plurals by *s*, there is

economy of mental effort in making these usages universal, and saying *goed*, *bringed*, *badder*, *foots*. These particular alterations, it is true, being in very familiar and frequent words, sound strange and shocking to us; yet their like have borne no insignificant part in the reduction of English to its present shape; and that their root has been in the mind and will of man admits of no denial or question.

If we thus need to call in the aid of no extra-human agencies in order to account for the changes of words, in respect either of meaning or of form, how is it with the production of new words and forms? This ought to be, if anything, the distinctively characteristic part of the growth of language, which should bring to light whatever of mysterious forces there may be involved in it. If names are given to things by speaking men, then the will of men has at least something to do with the determination of language; if, on the contrary, names are given, always or ever, otherwise than by speaking men, then we ought to be able to catch the power in the act, and to analyze and describe it, and see whether it be like that which is exhibited in the growth of animal organisms.

Now, in the first place, every one will have to acknowledge that men do sometimes give names to things. The father names his son, the author his book, the discoverer his isle, or bay, or plant, or animal, the inventor his machine or application of force, the geologist his stratum or epoch, the metaphysician his generalization — and so on, through an immense series of objects of thought and knowledge. Much of this, to be sure, does not gain universal use, does not get into the very heart of the popular speech; but that is perhaps because the essentials of popular speech were produced, not after a different fashion, but a long time ago. Parts of it, as circumstances determine, do make their way into familiar and every-day use, becoming as thoroughly English as any words that "came

in with the Conqueror," or even with his freebooting predecessors, the Angles and Saxons. Again, it must be confessed that these are for the most part not productions of words wholly new, but adaptations or borrowings of elements already existing in this or in other tongues. Yet this also is a matter of subordinate consequence. To the great majority of the men who are to use them, the words *telegraph*, *dahlia*, *petroleum*, *miocene*, with all their kith and kin, are precisely the same as if they were forged brand-new out of the nomenclator's brain. And in the occasional instances (as *gas*, invented outright by Van Helmont, about A. D. 1600) in which such new fabrications are made, they answer the same purpose, and just as well, as the others. It is the easier and the customary way to apply already existing material to new uses in the extension of language; men will sooner assent to and adopt your name if it be of that kind; but their assent and adoption is all that is needed to make language of it, from whatever source it may come. We have already examined, and referred without hesitation to human agency, the process by which appellations for new ideas are chiefly won — namely, by changing and adapting an old name to fit them. What is accomplished otherwise than in this method is in part by taking in consciously words out of other tongues. Thus, certain animals, or plants, or products, or peculiar instruments, or strange institutions, are brought within our sphere of knowledge in connection with the names which they have borne where they were before at home, and we go on to call them by the same names; our English language coming by such means to include scattered elements from languages all over the globe. Or, what is of much more importance, there is some foreign tongue, to the stores of which customary resort is had when anything new requires to be expressed. Such a source of new expression to the English is the Latin, and, in a less degree, the Greek.

No one, I believe, perplexes himself as to what may be the recondite organic affinity between English and the classical tongues, whereby, when a new term is wanted, a Latin vocable presents itself, and is seized and put to use. The act of choice involved in the process, the determination by the will of man, is clear and undeniable; all that the philologist attempts respecting the matter is to set forth the historical causes which have rendered possible and recommended our resort to these subsidiary sources. And when it is considered to what an enormous extent we have drawn upon the classical tongues, the dogma that men's will has nothing to do with determining language gains by this alone a very doubtful aspect. But further, still another part of the new names called for in the uses of language is obtained by combining elements already existing in the language itself, by making new compounds, or new derivatives with the aid of such formative elements, prefixes and suffixes, as the language has in living use. In English, to be sure, this method of production is of minor importance, since the habit of composition and abundant and varied derivation has become deadened with us. But English differs here only in degree from languages like the German, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. We do make compounds still, either loose ones, like *ink-bottle*, *steam-whistle*, *rail-fence*, or closer, like *inkstand*, *steamboat*, *rail-road;* and it has probably never entered into any one's mind to doubt that such were actually made by us, and that the parts composing them did not grow together by any inherent force, separate from the determining action of the will of English speakers. And if this is the case with our compounds, it cannot be otherwise with the more abundant and varied compounds of the other tongues to which we have referred. If any one be bold enough to maintain the contrary, he may be challenged to bring forward his proof, and to instance an example of a word of which the constituent members have combined by an internal organic attraction.

In this conclusion, however, is involved another, yet more important and far-reaching. On looking back into the history of our family of languages, we find that the combination of independent elements to form new words has been a process of the widest range and most conspicuous consequence. Not only have names been thus made, but grammatical forms also; the whole structure of inflective speech has had no other origin. Every formative element, whether prefix or suffix, was once an independent vocable, which first entered into composition with another vocable, and then, by a succession of changes of form and of meaning (changes which have been shown above to be due to human action alone), gradually arrived at its final shape and office. This can be proved by clear and acceptable evidence respecting so many formative elements, modern and ancient, that the argument by analogy from these to the rest is of a force which cannot be resisted. The *-ful* and *-less* by which we make adjectives, the *-ly* which forms adverbs, the *-d* of the past tense in our "regular" verbs, the *m* of *am*, the *-th* or *-s* of *loveth* or *loves*, are all demonstrably the relics of independent words; and if these (along with many others which might be instanced), then, by fair inference, all the others. The grammatical apparatus of those languages whose history we best understand is essentially of the same kind with the *-ful* of *helpful*, and to whatever force we attribute the production of the latter we must attribute that of the former also. There are, it is true, left alive a few representatives of the antediluvian period of linguistic science, who hold that endings exuded from roots and themes by some indefinable force, having no analogy with anything that appears in language nowadays; and such may, without appreciable damage to their reputation either for consistency or for insight, maintain the independent organic existence of language; but all adherents of the prevailing modern school of historical philology, the school

in which Schleicher himself is one of the leading masters, accept an explanation of structural growth which not only admits but demands the will of man as a determining force.

We will give our attention to but one other mode of change in language, namely the loss of words and phrases, their obsolescence and final disappearance. This doubtless presents analogies with the wasting of tissues in organized bodies. But it really means and is nothing save that communities who have formerly used certain words come to use them more and more rarely, and finally cease to use them altogether. When we look for reasons, we seek them in the grounds of human action, and only there: the thing which this vocable designated has gone out of use and so out of mind, and there has been no further occasion for its name to appear in men's mouths; for this other, new expressions have chanced to arise and win acceptance, crowding this out of employment, which is existence; for yet another, no explanation, perhaps, can be given save the unaccountable, but human, caprices of popular favor and disfavor. Forms are lost, too, by the operation of phonetic decay, which destroys their distinctive signs, and so brings about their abandonment and oblivion; cases and genders, persons and moods, as our language more than others abundantly testifies, can go in this way; but they can go in no other. The same force which makes can unmake also, and nothing else can do it.

We have thus seen, or seemed to see, that words are neither made, nor altered in form or meaning, nor lost, except by the action of men; whence it would also follow that that congeries of changes which makes up the so-called growth or life of language is produced solely by human action; and that, since human action depends on human will, languages, instead of being undeterminable by the will of man, are determinable by that will, and by

nothing else. And the strangest thing about it all is that I have made no assertion respecting matters of detail, and have instanced no case in illustration, which would not probably have been accepted by Professor Schleicher and those who hold with him. So far as I am aware, no believer in language as a natural organism has ever professed or attempted to put his finger on this, that, or the other item in language as impossible to human agency, and exhibiting the peculiar organic force in action. Schleicher himself, certainly, abundantly admits in detail that which he denies in the totality. All the parts are as we have described them; only the whole is something entirely different. The parts are white, but put them together and they are black; every factor is positive, but the sum is negative! Passing strange indeed it is that the utter illogicalness of such a conclusion escapes these people's notice. As we have already seen, that by which a certain dialect differs from its ancestor, nearer or more remote, is not an indivisible whole; it is a mass of particulars, some of them isolated, others hanging together in classes; and each of these particulars or classes has its own time, place, occasion, origin, and effects; their cumulative sum makes up the general result. Now it is easy to throw a group of objects, by distance and perspective, into such apparent shape as shall obscure or conceal their true character and mutual relations. Look at a village only a little way off upon the plain, and its houses are flung together into a mass; trees grow out from their roofs; a cloud rests on the summit of the church spire; the mountains behind are lower than the house-tops. If you refuse to judge appearances there exhibited by those of the similar village in the midst of which you stand, you may arrive at any the most ungrounded and absurd views respecting them. So in language: if you insist on standing aloof from the items of linguistic change and massing them together, if you will not estimate the re-

moter facts by the nearer, you will never attain a true comprehension of them. And this is just what Schleicher has done in the essay of which we are treating. He rejects the genuine scientific method, which is to study thoroughly the phenomena which fall under immediate observation, with the forces they involve, and to reason cautiously back from these into the obscurer distance, always making due allowance for change of circumstances, but never needlessly postulating a new force. There is not a vestige of scientific character in his fundamental dogma; it is worthy only of the mythologic stage of linguistic study, when men were accustomed to veil plain facts in obscure and fantastic phraseology, and to assume *quasi*-personal causes for effects which are really due to the secondary workings of obvious and every-day agencies.

If the argument presented above, as to the presence of the human will as a factor in the growth of language, be found well-grounded and acceptable, then the question of the "fixed laws" alleged to govern that growth is also virtually settled, and does not require detailed discussion. What we call "laws" are traceable everywhere, in the action of individuals and of communities, in the progress of human culture and human history, as well as in the changes of physical nature. The term is used, to be sure, in more than one sense, as designating generalizations and inferred causations of quite diverse character; but for that very reason a close examination is necessary in each particular case where the government of law is asserted, that we may avoid the gross, though too common, blunder of confounding the various orders of law, and identifying their results. An egg goes into the hatching-room and comes out a chicken; a bale of cotton goes into the factory and comes out a piece of cloth; there is a palpable analogy between the two cases so far; and there are, beyond all question, laws in plenty, even physical

laws, concerned in producing the latter result, as well as the former; but we do not therefore decline to peep inside the factory door, and satisfy ourselves with assuming that the cloth is a purely physical product, and an organism, because the chicken is so. Yet this, in my opinion, is precisely what Schleicher has done. A very little unprejudiced and common-sense research applied to language suffices to show us that the laws under which its so-called life goes on are essentially different from those which determine the development of living organisms, animal or vegetable; they are simply modes of human action. Every law of speech has its foundation and reason in the users of speech — in their mental operations, their capacities, their wants and preferences, their physical structure, their circumstances, natural or historical, and their habits, the accumulated and concreted effects of all the rest. There is not less of linguistic mythology in setting up the government of language by law than the absence in it of human action as a reason why it should be regarded as an organism.

It would be great cause for rejoicing if this mythologic mode of treating the facts of language were confined to a single scholar, or a single school. But it does, in truth, characterize no small part of the current linguistic philosophy — even, or especially, in Germany, and among those who most affect profundity. Many an able and acute scholar seems minded to indemnify himself for dry and tedious grubbings among the roots and forms of comparative philology by the most airy ventures in the way of constructing Spanish castles of linguistic science.

Languages, then, far from being natural organisms, are the gradually elaborated products of the application by human beings of means to ends, of the devising of signs by which conceptions may be communicated and the operations of thought carried on. They are a constituent part of the hardly won substance of human civilization.

They are necessary results of human endowments and dispositions, and also highly characteristic results; yet only results, and not the sole characteristic ones, of man's peculiar powers. Every human being, if endowed with the ordinary gifts of humanity, is put in possession, as part of his training, of a language, as he is of all the other elements of the civilization into the midst of which he happens to be born, and the acquisition of which makes him a developed man, instead of a mere crude savage, a being little higher than the highest of the other animals. If we are to give language a name which shall bring out its essential character most distinctly and sharply, and even in defiance of those who would make of it an organism, we shall call it an INSTITUTION, one of the institutions that make up human culture. The term, probably enough, offends the prejudices of not a few; yet it is well chosen and correctly applied, and involves not a particle of derogation to the high dignity and infinite importance of human speech.

The study, moreover, which takes for its object languages, their varieties, structure, and laws of growth, is not a natural science, any more than is the study of civilization at large, or of any of its other constituents, of architecture, of jurisprudence, of history. Its many and striking analogies with the physical sciences cover a central diversity; its essential method is historical.

Of course, its foundation being withdrawn, Schleicher's whole argument in support of Darwinism falls to the ground, and there remains merely an interesting, and, if rightly used, instructive analogy between the two classes of facts and phenomena compared — one which Lyell (in his "Antiquity of Man," chap. xxiii.), with a soberness of judgment strangely in contrast with the over-rash zeal of the German scholar, was content to set forth as an analogy only. Darwinism is content to stand or fall by its own merits; it does not ask to be bolstered up by linguistic science.

The second of the two pamphlets which I have undertaken to criticise is entitled "On the Importance of Language for the Natural History of Man."[1] It was published a couple of years later than the other, to which it endeavors to fill the office of a defense and support. Some persons, namely, having raised objections to the unsupported assumption there made, that languages are real concrete organisms, having a material existence, the second essay is intended to supply the lacking demonstration of that doctrine. Let us see how the demonstration is conducted.

The author begins with pointing out that the characteristic mode of activity of any organ — as, for example, of the stomach, the brain, the muscles — is now generally acknowledged to depend upon the material constitution of that organ. So the locomotion of different animals, even the peculiar gait of individual men, is conditioned by the structure of their organs of motion. The same is the case with language. This is the "audible symptom of the activity of a complex of material relations in the formation of the brain and of the organs of speech, with their nerves, bones, muscles," etc. The material differences of structure on which the differences of language in different individuals depend have never been anatomically demonstrated, and they may even prove forever too subtile for demonstration; but that does not show that they are not real. What light is to the sun, that audible sound is to these efficient peculiarities of organization: it manifests them; and it may, in a philosophical sense, be said to be identical with them. Hence, languages have an independent material existence, and the objections brought against their treatment as such are to be deemed and taken as set aside!

I solemnly affirm that this is, so far as I am able to

[1] *Ueber die Bedeutung der Sprache für die Naturgeschichte des Menschen.* Von August Schleicher. Weimar, 1865. 12mo. Pp. 29.

make it, a faithful abstract of Schleicher's argument; and I refer incredulous readers to his text for its verification.

The most hasty examination of it cannot but make clear, in the first place, that the author, whether aware of it or not, has completely shifted his ground. A natural organism, which has grown and developed by inherent powers of its own, and under fixed laws, through a succession of ages, is one thing; a symptom or manifestation of a structural difference, which, speaking philosophically, may be said to be that difference itself, in the same sense (rather a Pickwickian one, surely) in which light is the sun, is another and a very different thing: one is a being, the other is a function; one is an actor, or at least an agency, the other is an act or effect. All the inferences, for Darwinism and everything else, which Professor Schleicher founded on his former doctrine, are virtually abandoned; you cannot make the history of a function prove the transmutability of animal and vegetable species. The only feature, so far as I can discover, which the two doctrines have in common is their denial of the agency of the human will: voluntary action is ruled out, on the one hand, because language is an organism, growing and developing by its own internal forces; on the other hand, because it is the necessary effect of real physical peculiarities of structure. This, then, is the point to which our attention has still to be particularly directed.

We have first to notice that it is not the uttered and audible part or side of speech alone that Schleicher has in view. He does not intend simply that, constituted as we are, we must produce the articulated sounds, the alphabetic elements, which we actually produce, and no others. For this by itself would never lead to unity of speech in a community or race. Out of our alphabet alone, without importing a click, or a guttural, or a tone, from other tongues, we might build up a language which

should be as unlike our own as any that is spoken upon the face of the earth. No; his doctrine, as evinced by the whole course of his reasonings, is plainly this: the reason why I, for example, say *hat*, instead of *hut*, or *chapeau*, or *causia*, or any other of the thousand words which people in various parts of the world use or have used to designate their head-coverings, is that my brain and my organs of speech are so constituted and connected that *hat* is to me the natural and necessary sign of this particular conception — and so with all the other signs that make up my language. Truly a most astounding doctrine! There are, I believe, few writers on language who would have the hardihood to maintain it. Hardly one would fail to acknowledge that, whatever natural internal connection there may have been in the initial stage of language between sound and sense, there is, at least, none now; that the English-speaking child *learns* to call a hat a *hat*, and could have learned to call it a *hut* or *chapeau* — as, indeed, he often does, earlier or later; which of the names he acquires being a matter of entire indifference to him until he has acquired one, and become so accustomed to it that it seems to him the "natural" name for his tile, and he can only by an effort change his habit and come to call it by any other name. Or, generalizing this — for what is true of this one sign is true of every other of which our language is composed — while each human being has the capacity of speech, none is directed by nature to speak any one language rather than any other; the infant, of whatever race, acquires the language of those who are about him, or sometimes more than one, and could have acquired any other equally well; but the older he grows, the more the language he has acquired becomes to him that habit which is justly called a "second nature," and the harder it is for him to lay it aside for another, or add another to it. These are, it appears to me, clear and undeniable truths; there is neither mystery

nor doubt about them; and their importance is so fundamental that he who overlooks or denies them cannot fail to make shipwreck of his whole linguistic philosophy.

Our view of the acquisition of language is not in the least at variance with modern scientific theories of cerebral structure and action. There may be in the physical constitution of my brain something that makes me say *hat;* there may be atomic equivalents and atomic connections determining every item of my speech and all its combinations and uses; but it is a secondary or acquired something, a peculiarity superinduced by external causes, not inherent and self-determined. It is analogous with all the knowledge, the memories, the preferences, the habits, the special aptitudes, which my experience and opportunities, working on a general and specific basis of capacities, have produced in me. That I choose to wear a hat at all, that I prefer one of a certain size and color, that I take my hat off when I meet a friend, that I remember the hats I have worn and where and when I got them, that I know how many I possess at this moment and where they are — all this depends, if you will, on infinitesimal peculiarities in the present structure of my brain; and it is all of the same kind with my capacity and habit of using the word *hat*. This is a trivial example; but it is not less instructive and decisive of the points involved than the most dignified one that could have been selected.

Again, our view does not make against the theory of the transmission to a certain degree of the effects of culture in the form of higher capacity. Among a certain number of persons born into such circumstances that they acquire English as their "mother tongue," one may possess by descent a genius upon which even English, with all its force and beauty, imposes a laming constraint; while, on the other hand, and much more probably, there will be others whose meaner powers would be

more in harmony with some lower form of speech, as Chinese or Malay. So it is everywhere; if men were divided and languaged according to the kinship of their endowments, the present boundaries of races would be entirely broken up, and every community on earth would become a Babel. As things are, every man learns that language which circumstances place within his reach, whatever it may be, and works out and exhibits his higher or lower endowment inside of it, in his management and use of it. Even the humblest language that exists is so far beyond the capacity of even the ablest human being to produce unaided, that its acquisition raises him to a plane of power indefinitely higher than he could ever have attained if left to grow up speechless. All that he can have reason to regret is that circumstances should not have been still more favorable to him, and enabled him to work out the whole force which it was in him to develop. And what is thus true of language is true of culture in general, in its other elements not less than in the linguistic.

Professor Schleicher has noticed, or has had his attention called to, the objection to his theory of language which is involved in the power to learn other languages than one's mother tongue; and he endeavors to set it aside — after the following fashion. First, pushing further a comparison already made, he says that a man can also learn to go on all fours, or to walk on his hands, while nevertheless no one can doubt that we have a natural gait as men, conditioned by our bodily structure. But it must be evident at a glance that this comparison, at any rate, does not run on all fours. To make it other than helplessly lame, we ought to see that a human being if brought up by quadrupeds would move naturally on hands and feet together; if by birds, would fly; if by fishes, would swim: in each case, without ever feeling a disposition to walk erect upon his feet. For he who has

never learned any language but English, of whatever parentage he may really be, is undistinguishable from an Englishman, and never exhibits the slightest tendency to relapse into the ancestral dialect. But Professor Schleicher goes on to argue the matter upon other grounds. Again ignoring the question as to how a person obtains his "mother tongue" at the outset, he raises a doubt as to whether any one ever really acquires in a complete manner any other language; and, granting even that that be done, he suggests, as the very simple explanation, that such a one becomes in fact a different man from what he was; another constitution of brain and organs of speech is substituted for, or added to, his natural one. Further, he continues, even if (which is not to be conceded) a person becomes thus at the same time an Englishman, a Frenchman, and a German, it is still to be observed that these are related languages — in a certain sense, species of the same genus. But it is not at all to be credited that the same man can be master at once of wholly diverse tongues, like German and Chinese, or Arabic and Hottentot, any more than that he can walk easily and comfortably both on two feet and on all fours. Now it is an easy way thus to dispose of an adverse argument by endeavoring to destroy the foundation of facts on which it rests; but what Schleicher refuses to believe is an undeniable truth: children of European parents do learn, where circumstances favor it, those outlandish tongues along with their own, as readily and surely as those of the most nearly related European nations; they do not perceive or feel the difference between a related and a non-related tongue; that is discoverable only by a process of reflection and learned comparison of which no young child is capable. Instances of persons learning at once languages like German and Chinese are merely less frequent than the others, and for the simple reason that circumstances do not so often bring them about. When

one has once schooled his thoughts to one form of expression, it is true, the difficulty of acquiring a second will be partly proportioned to the resemblance or diversity between the latter and the former; but in this there is nothing strange or peculiar, nor does it in the least favor Schleicher's theory. One might just as well say of a person who has mastered a musical instrument, as the flute, that he makes it his mode of musical expression because the minute constitution of his brain and of his blowing and fingering apparatus render it a necessity to him; that he never acquires an equal mastery over any other instrument, or, if he does so, it is only in virtue of his becoming so far another being; that he may at the utmost become able to play kindred instruments, like the clarionet and bassoon; but that the violin and the piano are entirely beyond his reach — proceeding then to argue that the musical notes of the flutist, as they reflect and represent peculiarities of his organism otherwise unmanifested, are themselves material existences; and that the development of modern flute melody from the first rude tones of the ancient pipes exhibits the essential characteristics of organic life, and proves the truth of the Darwinian theory! I say it in all seriousness, such an argument would be precisely as good as that which Professor Schleicher has constructed, and which is one of the most striking examples I have ever seen of the way in which a man of high merit and worthy achievement in one department of a subject can in another deny the most fundamental principles, be blind to the plainest truths, and employ a mode of reasoning in which there is neither logic nor common sense.

The subsidiary statements and reasonings of these two pamphlets partake fully of the unsoundness of their main argument. Thus, in the immediate sequel of what we have just been considering, the author declares that speech is the sole exclusive characteristic of man, and that any

given anthropoid ape who should be able to speak would be called by us a man [and a brother], however unlike a human being he might be in other respects. As to this last assertion, it is so easy to speculate where the test of fact can never be applied, that I will not take the trouble to contradict it, although my own conviction is strongly against it, and I cannot but doubt whether Schleicher himself would have proved equal to fraternizing with his fellow-man if the case had been realized. But certainly, speech is so far from being man's sole distinctive quality that it is not a quality at all, in our author's sense; it is only a possession. The capacity of forming and acquiring speech is a quality, and one among the many which constitute the higher endowment of man; but let the child of the most gifted family of the most highly cultivated race grow up untaught, in solitude, and he will no more employ a language than he will build a temple, paint a picture, or construct a locomotive. Not all the boasted development of the race will enable a single individual, if thrown upon his own unaided resources, to speak; because speech, like the other elements of civilization, does not go down by inheritance, but by the process of teaching and learning.

It is not true, then, as our author argues later, that linguistic science leads us to the conclusion that man developed out of lower forms of animal life because language has been of slow development, and without language man would not be man. The rise of language had nothing to do with the growth of man out of an apish stock, but only with his rise out of savagery and barbarism. Its non-acquisition by a given individual cuts off, not his human nature, physical or intellectual, but his human culture; it puts him back into a condition from which he would at once begin to advance by slow degrees to that of a speaking man, as his remote ancestors had already done before him. Man was man before the development

of speech began; he did not become man through and by means of it.

In connection with this, Schleicher brings forward again a dogma which he has repeatedly laid down elsewhere with great positiveness and confidence: namely, that "it is absolutely impossible to carry back all languages to one and the same original language;" that there must necessarily have been at least as many original languages as there are now existing families of language. This is entirely wrong, and even a complete *non sequitur* from the premises which he himself accepts. For he holds, with the historical philologists in general, that all languages had the same morphological form at the outset; that is to say, that they began in the condition of bare roots, designating the simplest and most obvious physical conceptions. He doubtless holds, also (I do not find a specific statement upon the subject, but it is an obvious and necessary inference from his expressed views), as others do, that it is not possible to point out with certainty the precise roots and conceptions with which the different families of language began; they are too much disguised and overlaid by the changes and additions of later linguistic growth to admit of being distinctly traced. Where, then, is the impossibility that the same roots should have served as basis of development to more than one family of languages? The question of probability we may discuss in any given instance as much as we please, but the assumption of impossibility is ruled out by the very nature of the case. To make this assumption, as Schleicher does, on the mere ground of the great unlikeness between the developed families, is quite illogical: for if languages starting even with the same completely developed structure can come to be as unlike as are English, Welsh, and Hindî, for example, there is absolutely no amount or degree of dissimilarity which might not arise between tongues which had in common only their first rude ele-

ments. This seems a truth so incontestable that its denial is one of the strangest points in Schleicher's linguistic creed, one that betrays most tellingly the character of that creed, as made up of prejudices rather than of cautious and well-founded deductions.

If there is another point in the creed entitled to contest the palm of unreasonableness with this one, it is our author's view of language as an infallible test of race, and the only firm basis for a classification of mankind. "How inconstant," he exclaims, "are the form of skull and other so-called distinctions of race! Language, on the other hand, is always a completely constant characteristic." And he goes on to point out that a German (we will say instead, an Englishman) may well enough chance to rival in woolliness and prognathism the most pronounced negro-head, while nevertheless he will never speak naturally (*von Hause aus*) a negro language. To exhibit the preposterousness of this claim, we have only to invert it, and say that it may well enough happen now and then that a person of African blood should rival in complexion, hair, and Caucasian cast of features a descendant of purest Puritan stock or of the first families of Virginia, while nevertheless he will never, never speak as his mother tongue the English language! I fancy that some of us have chanced upon facts not entirely consistent with that statement. I should like to see some adherent of Schleicher's opinions going around in our American community with an English grammar and dictionary, determining by the evidence of language to what race its various constituents belong. It would not be difficult in almost any American village to set up before him for examination a row of human beings who should show unmistakable traces of African, Milesian, Scottish, and German, as well as English, descent; and yet every mother's son of them should speak English as his mother tongue, and should not know a word of any other language under the sun.

And our author's imagined woolly and prognathic German, or any other German, would only need to be brought up from infancy in an African *kraal*, in order to speak African as naturally (*von Kraale aus*) as the child whose ancestors had lived for a thousand years on the *karroo*. It is nothing short of gross judicial blindness that can make one overlook the infinite number of facts like these which the history of languages presents, and their bearing, and set up the mere accident, as we may fairly call it, of one's mother tongue as the sole and sufficient test of race. One's "mother tongue" is determined simply by one's teachers; and it is only because one's teachers are usually one's parents and a community akin in race with them that language becomes an indication, a *primâ facie* evidence, of race. On the broad scale, it is to a considerable extent a trustworthy evidence; and its contributions to ethnology are of extraordinary and unsurpassed value; but its degree of force in any individual case is to be measured by the degree of probability, determinable in part on other grounds than linguistic, that the given community is one of descent and not of agglomeration or mixture.

Another fallacy of Professor Schleicher's — one, however, which stands in a more logical connection with his general theory of language — is his assumption that the primary differences of language are geographical; that is to say, that forms of speech grew up in the outset resembling one another in the ratio of their proximity and of the accordance of the surrounding physical conditions. There is no good reason for holding any such doctrine; it falls to the ground, at any rate, with the doctrine of the necessary physical origin of language, and is not unavoidably involved even in that. Not physical causes, but historical, determine language; dwellers in the same plain speak different tongues, without the slightest tendency toward unification, save as the effect of communication

and mixture; dwellers in the plain and on the mountains, in the interior and by the sea, in icy, temperate, and torrid climes, speak the same or nearly related speech, because it comes down to them by tradition through the separated representatives of a single community. Schleicher says further that "in the later life of language, among men who live under essentially similar conditions, the language also changes itself uniformly, or spontaneously and in corresponding manner in all individuals who speak that language:" thus ignoring the fact that only individual action tends to diversify language, and only communication to keep it uniform, and once more explaining as the result of physical forces phenomena which are in truth ascribable to human action, and to that alone.

In drawing his second pamphlet to a close, our author refers again to a very peculiar theory of his, more fully set forth elsewhere (in the introductory part of his "Deutsche Sprache"), that language-making and historical activity necessarily belong to different and successive periods in the life of a race or nation, the former absorbing the whole national force while it is in progress, and rendering the latter impossible. A community lies *perdu* while it is developing its speech (not learning to talk simply, but working the language up to its highest point of synthetic structure), and then steps confidently forward to play its part in the drama of general history. This is so palpable a fancy, and a fancy only, that we need lose no time over its confutation; we may simply notice that it involves a most peculiar conception of language-making, since this really goes on as long as the race lives, and cannot be shown to exhaust more nervous force in synthesis than in analysis; a most peculiar conception of history, as if there were no history without record and publicity; and a most peculiar understanding of the circumstances which by their concurrence operate to bring a race for-

ward into conspicuousness, or to make it take a part in those interworkings whose result is the higher civilization of the more gifted and favored races.

Finally, Professor Schleicher winds up with a bit of theory in pure natural history, which does not precisely concern us as philologists, but yet is too characteristic to pass over, and which I accordingly give in his own words: "It is in the highest degree probable that not all organisms which entered upon the road toward becoming man have worked their way up to the formation of language. A part of them were left behind in their development, did not enter upon the second stage of development, but fell under a law of retrogression, and, as is the case with all such deteriorations, of gradual decay. The remains of these beings, who continued speechless, deteriorated, and did not arrive at the condition of becoming human, lie before us in the anthropoid apes"! This looks like Darwinism reversed: the apes do not so much represent a condition out of which man has arisen as that into which creatures that might have been men have fallen, through simple neglect of learning to talk! If we accept the doctrine, we cannot but be impressed with the grandeur of the work in which we, as a Philological Association,[1] are bearing our humble part. By encouraging and promoting, to the extent of our associated capacity, the maintenance and progress of language, we perhaps contribute to preserve our own remote posterity and the whole human race from sinking to the condition of the gorilla and the chimpanzee!

These peculiar and indefensible views of Schleicher appear more or less in all his later works which have occasion to deal with general questions of language. Thus, for example, in the introductory part of his "Deutsche Sprache" (already more than once referred to), they

[1] Namely, the American Philological Association, before which this essay was first presented, at its annual meeting in New Haven, July, 1871.

make so much of a figure as to render that work, interesting and suggestive as it is, a most unsafe one to put in the hands of persons not qualified to use it in an independent critical spirit. But in the two pamphlets which we have been considering, they are presented almost pure and simple; there is hardly room beside them for the acuteness of the comparative philologist to appear; while we are, of course, able to pick out here and there a remark or a paragraph which sustains the reputation of the author, yet, as a whole, the essays are utterly unworthy of him, and can only be read with pain and regret by those who admire him and respect his memory. From the beginning to the end, in foundation and superstructure, they are unsound, illogical, and untrue, and must hurt the cause of science just so far as they are read and accepted. I had supposed that, in the bare and overstrained quality of their errors, they would carry everywhere their own refutation with them; but facts show that this is not so; there are still incautious sciolists by whom every error that has a great name attached to it is liable to be received as pure truth, and who are even especially attracted by good hearty paradoxes. These two papers have been translated into French as the first and inaugural fascicle of a "Philological Collection," or international series of important essays in philology; and even so sound and careful a philologist as M. Bréal has been misled into giving the inauspicious beginning an implied sanction by letting his name appear alone upon the title-page, as author of the Introduction.[1] And the former of the two has been done into English and published in London by

[1] *Collection Philologique. Recueil de Travaux originaux ou traduits relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Histoire Littéraire avec un avant propos de M. Michel Bréal. Premier Fascicule. La théorie de Darwin. — De l'importance du Langage pour l'Histoire naturelle de l'Homme, par A. Schleicher.* Paris, 1868. 8vo. Pp. vi. 31. M. Bréal's preface is of but a page or two, and in it he indicates — though, in my opinion, in a manner much less distinct and decided than the case demanded — his at least partial non-acceptance of Schleicher's views.

a Dr. Bikkers, who in his preface lauds it to the skies, as containing (with the sole exception of the dogma of the necessary diversity of primitive languages, which he rejects) only such doctrines as are to be taken for the established truths, the "axioms," of modern linguistic science (the only resemblance that they in fact bear to axioms being that they are incapable of demonstration).[1] It was the falling in by chance with Dr. Bikkers's version, a few weeks since, in a library where it could only do unmixed harm, that led me to draw out and present these strictures.[2] Views which might seem to be self-refuting require to be elaborately argued down when they are in danger of winning currency and acceptance; especially if they have to do, like these, with principles of fundamental importance. And reverence for the name and works of a truly great man should not lead us to cover up or treat with indulgence his errors, when they are sought to be propagated under the shield of his reputation, and tend, if accepted, to cast the science of language back into a chaos as deep as that from which it has lately begun to emerge.

[1] *Darwinism tested by the Science of Language.* Translated from the German of Professor August Schleicher, with preface and additional notes, by Dr. Alex. V. W. Bikkers. London, 1869. 12mo. Pp. 69.

[2] I had given the substance of them before a local society several years ago, on the first appearance of the second essay, but had no intention of making them more publicly.

XII.

STEINTHAL AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY OF LANGUAGE.

HAJJIM STEINTHAL, though little known to the general English-reading public, is one of the leading linguistic scholars of Germany. He represents, as professor extraordinary, the general science of language in the Berlin University. He is joint editor, with Professor Lazarus of Berne, of the "Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft," which is now in its seventh volume. His more important separate works have been his "Grammatik, Logik, und Psychologie" (1855), the "Charakteristik der hauptsächlichsten Typen des Sprachbaues" (1860), the "Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern" (1863), and "Die Mande-Neger-Sprachen psychologisch und phonetisch betrachtet" (1867), of which the "Charakteristik," especially, has necessarily lain upon the table of every deeper student of language. He was also the *rédacteur* of Heyse's "System der Sprachwissenschaft" (1856), and has put forth a considerable number of valuable lesser works and essays, the titles of which need not be given here. Nothing of his, so far as we know, has ever been translated into English. This is not, indeed, to be wondered at, since he habitually writes for a limited circle of readers, and not at all in a style calculated to be taking with the general public, either of England and Amer-

ica or of any other country. His point of view and method of treatment are distinctively and highly metaphysical, and what he produces is wont, therefore, to be hard reading, even for the practised linguistic scholar. He has been, in particular, the disciple, interpreter, and continuer of Wilhelm von Humboldt, a man whom it is nowadays the fashion to praise highly, without understanding or even reading him; Steinthal is *the* man in Germany, perhaps in the world, who penetrates the mysteries, unravels the inconsistencies, and expounds the dark sayings, of that ingenious and profound, but unclear and wholly unpractical thinker.

The present work is intended by its author to be a new elaboration and digest of his former contributions to linguistics, the summary of his philosophy of language. Its first part, now published, is founded mainly on his "Grammatik, Logik, und Psychologie;" the parts to follow will be an expansion rather of the "Charakteristik," treating of the ethnological peculiarities of the different families of language, our own in particular, and adding the history of languages, especially of the Greek, Latin, and Germanic; the whole forming three or four volumes. All students of language, we are sure, will thank us for bringing to their notice this comprehensive and systematic work of a writer who is worthy of careful attention.

It is not our intention to give here a comprehensive analysis and criticism of Steinthal's first volume, nor to set forth the general features of his scientific system. We prefer to take up but a single subject or chapter, namely the Origin of Language, and, by discussing that in detail, to get an impression of the author's way of working. No more central and telling subject, certainly, could be selected than this for attaining such a purpose; its exposition ought to bring to light the strength or the weakness that is in him, and enable us to see how fruitful of advantage to science his labors are likely to prove.

The Origin of Language is treated in the fifth and last chapter of the Introduction (pp. 72–90). The subjects of the previous chapters have been: 1. Scientific knowledge in general, the task of philosophy, and that of linguistic philosophy in particular; 2. Extent and division of the science of language; 3. Relation of this science to other sciences; 4. Speaking and thinking, grammar and logic. In entering upon this one, the author remarks that he comes at last to the more precise determination of the task which is to occupy him in the present work. "How could one hope," he asks, "to discover the principle of grammar, without having exactly analyzed and thoroughly investigated the essential character of language and its manifold relations to the mental activities, its function in the mental economy, its efficiency for the development of the mind? But these researches we have to begin with the investigation of the origin of language." It is characteristic of Steinthal's synthetic and *à priori* way of working, that he thinks it necessary to settle thus, at the very outset, the most recondite and difficult question in the whole science, one that most scholars would doubtless prefer to put off to the end of their work, as what might be settled by inference when everything else was established, and the way thus duly prepared for it. But, as we have hinted already, he is nothing if not metaphysical, and the metaphysical method requires that one get behind the facts he deals with, and evolve them by a necessity out of some predetermining principle. This is the opposite of the current scientific method, which is proud to acknowledge its dependence on facts, and prefers to proceed by cautious induction backward from the known and familiar to the obscure and unknown. Both methods ought to come to the same thing in the end, and will do so, provided they be conducted with sufficient reach and insight, and at the same time with sufficient moderation and caution; we are used, however, to seeing

the metaphysical, when it comes to deal with concrete facts and their relations, fail by labored obscurity and feebleness or by forced and distorting treatment. The result alone can decide which is the better, as applied to language.

Men ask for a definition of language, we are next told; but very improperly, since things of such immense content are not to be defined; and moreover, a definition, like a picture, can represent only something at rest, or only a moment in an action; while language is manifold, and constantly growing and developing. If, then, we inquire how it is with language, the proper answer follows, "It is what it is becoming" (*sie ist, was sie wird*). Surely, it was hardly worth while to moot the point, only to come to so barren a result as this. Locomotives, likewise, are numerous and various, and their mode of construction is all the time changing; yet it is possible to give a plain man a reply to the question, "What is a locomotive?" When a definition of language is called for, men expect the answer, "it is audible thinking;" or, "it is the body of which thought is the soul;" or, "it is the spoken instrumentality of thought;" or, "it is a body of uttered signs for conceptions" — or something of the kind, drawn out with more or less fullness, enough to show us, in a preliminary way, what the answerer's general idea of language is. The author might have left out the paragraphs he devotes to this little discussion, and nobody would have missed them; we only refer to the matter because it illustrates a vexatious way he sometimes has of startling and rebuffing a common-sense inquirer with a reply from a wholly different and unexpected point of view: as when you ask a physician, "Well, doctor, how does your patient promise this morning?" and he answers, with a wise look and an oracular shake of the head, "It is not given to humanity to look into futurity!" The effect is not destitute of the element of *bathos*.

Now we are called on to note that the way in which a problem is stated is of the highest consequence, often half involving the solution; and it is proposed to determine "what demand this present question contains, what significance it can alone have."

And, to lead the way to such a statement, our author gives a sketch of the discussions respecting the origin of language, as they were carried on, in an especially lively manner, during the last century. Some maintained that language was invented by man, under the pressure of necessity and convenience, as a means of communicating with his fellows and securing their assistance. "He, the much-inventive man, has, among many other remarkable works, invented language also." And it was not at the outset so perfect a work that rude and uncultivated men should not have been equal to its production; having been improved and perfected later, somewhat as the means of navigation have been, from the first hollowed-out trunk of a tree to the modern ship of a hundred cannon. The opposing party referred to the languages of the negroes and of our Indians, as being so cunningly devised products as to imply a degree of reflection (*Nachdenken*) of which such savages were not capable. Moreover, the invention of language would require reason (*Vernunft*), and before the possession of language men could have had no reason. Therefore language must have been given by God; it is no human invention, but a divine communication.

According to Steinthal, those who defended the human invention of speech show a revolting triviality and rudeness of conception and view; while the upholders of the divine origin saw deeper. From his sketch of the argument, indeed, we should draw quite the contrary conclusion; but this may pass, as of small consequence. Of much more consequence is it to notice that he makes no reference of any kind, anywhere in his chapter, to a view

of the nature and origin of language which is held by a whole school of linguistic students at the present day, and which is akin with the one first stated above, only modified to accord with the better knowledge and deeper insight of modern times. An adherent of that view would be likely to urge that it is an easy matter to cast reproach and ridicule upon the last-century form of it; but that to carry from the latter an inferential condemnation over to its present form is much more easy and convenient than fair and ingenuous; and he would be justified in adding that its present opponents are in the habit of combating it in that way, and in that alone. This also, however, only by the way; what concerns us here is rather what our author does than what he leaves undone.

He declares, namely, that he cannot join the other party, who assume for language a divine origin, notwithstanding their deeper insight; and that, "for one general reason and two special reasons," which he proceeds to set forth. We give the general reason in his own words: —

> "Of God, the philosophy of religion, founded on metaphysics, has to take account. It has to determine how far, in order to the understanding of every being and of every occurrence, in order to the full and true apprehension of all actuality, we are to add in our thoughts the idea of God. All other sciences are unauthorized to bring in God as a means of explanation. The philosophy of religion teaches *πάντα θεῖα*; the special sciences teach *φυσικά* or *ἀνθρώπινα πάντα*; and the two may not contradict one another."

We fail to appreciate the force or to see the appositeness of this objection. If to bring in the idea of God is the monopoly of religious philosophy, then, whenever that idea comes in, religious philosophy comes also; and the latter is called upon in this case to help solve a problem which science finds insoluble. Religious philosophy and the special sciences may be so distinct as not even to have in common the idea of a God; but, at least, the same person may be both special scientist and (even without

knowing it) religious philosopher; and what he cannot do in the one character he may attempt to do in the other. If Steinthal chooses to say that it is not scientific to appeal to a divine author, that it only shows the weakness of the man of science, whose problem is really soluble without such appeal, then we shall understand what he means, and perhaps agree heartily with him; but to claim that God cannot have originated language because, in our classification of knowledge, we put the idea of God under another rubric than the linguistic, seems to us a mere verbal quibble.

In the "two special reasons," also, we find force and pertinence equally wanting. God, we are told, must either have created language in man, or taught it to him. But the latter is impossible; because, although much may be taught man by means of language, teaching is only possible by that means, and therefore language itself cannot be taught. This, we remark, in spite of the fact that every child learns language without being previously possessed of language whereby to acquire it! To be sure, Steinthal does not, as we shall see hereafter, believe that children do learn language, in the ordinary sense of that term; yet, whatever the precise nature of the process, why should not God, in a confessedly supernatural or miraculous way, have been to the first human beings what they were, and what human parents have in general since been, to their children? This assumption, however, is in a manner involved and answered in our author's further reasoning, in refutation of the alternative theory, that God created language in men — that is to say, made it a part of their nature or constitution. Language, he says, is evidently not created in us; it is certain and evident that the child "appropriates" (*sich aneignet*) the language of the community in which it grows up. And he goes on: —

"God, then, would have to be regarded as having created language

in the first human pair alone, while the succeeding generations learned to speak, each from its own parents. But this assumption also is impossible. For what man can learn, that he can also bring forth as original out of himself, without instruction; for all learning is merely facilitated, supported, and for that very reason limited creation. But what one man should receive from God as an exceptional endowment, that no other man would be able to learn from him. If, therefore, language had been created in the first human beings, their children never could have appropriated it. If they were in fact able to do this, then the language of the first human beings could not have been an exceptional endowment of theirs, and their children must have been able also to create it independently for themselves. If, then, in order to man's possession of language, he absolutely must have had the power to create it, the first man in like manner with all his successors, why should it in only a single case have been created in him by God?"

We have given this in Steinthal's own words, because we feared not being able to do him justice in a paraphrase or summary. We think the inaptness of the reasoning will at once strike almost every one. The assumption is declared impossible, because — why should things have been so? We may retort, it is possible, because — why shouldn't they? What the Creator might or might not have thought it proper to do for the first human beings, in order to give the race a fair start in life, we would rather not claim to decide. And as to the impossibility of transmission claimed to be involved, it amounts simply to this, that a miracle contravenes the laws of nature. But that, we imagine, is involved in the very idea of a miracle. Our author might just as well assert that water could not be miraculously converted into wine, because there are certain chemical elements in wine which water does not contain; and because, if it had once been so converted, then all water would have to be so convertible, which every one knows not to be the case. The assumption of the divine origin of language does not, as we understand it, deny that each man, as a part of his human nature, possesses the capacity to learn and use and make language;

it only implies that, whereas this capacity might be indefinitely or infinitely long in developing itself so as to produce languages like those we know, the first men were miraculously put by anticipation in possession of its perfected fruits. It is a part, and a natural part, of the view which supposes the first human beings to have been produced in the maturity of growth and in a condition of high culture, by a direct and anomalous fiat of the Almighty. We are ourselves just as far as Steinthal from accepting the theory that language was a miraculous gift to the first human beings; but our objections to it would be of a wholly different character from his. Here, it seems to us, he again shows the same incapacity already once noticed, of getting on the same plane with the holders of an opinion which he opposes, and of so constructing his argument that it shall be understood and received by those against whom it is directed.

We are now led on by him to a more serious attempt at breaking through the low and trivial assumed conditions of the problem as looked at by the controversialists of the last century. Our views of man, he says, have undergone a complete revolution since that time. As what a little, petty creature was he then regarded! born in the mire, ever crawling on the earth, a prey to want, from which he was all the time devising ways to extricate himself; driven by the pressure of necessity from one improvement of his at first rough work to another; nothing wise and great in his development; indeed, no inward development at all! "Of the primeval powers of the human spirit, out of which the institutions of social life have grown, and from which they continually draw the juices of life, those people knew nothing; unknown was the creative force from which religious and moral ideas flow forth unsought, for the human being's own gratification."

Here, again, is seen Steinthal's complete antagonism

with the inductive and scientific tendencies of the day. We should have said that the prevailing movement of modern thought was precisely the reverse of what is thus described; that only the philosophers of the eighteenth century and those who in the nineteenth inherit their spirit could regard the first human being as having walked the earth with lofty tread and gaze uplifted, letting grand ideas and noble institutions flow forth spontaneously from the deep springs of his soul, and enjoying their flow; comprehending by intuition the Creator and his works, and worshipping him with a pure adoration; meditating on problems of psychology, and giving birth to soulful expression as naturally and unconsciously as he walked or moved his arms. Modern science, on the contrary, claims to be proving, by the most careful and exhaustive study of man and his works, that our race began its existence on earth at the bottom of the scale, instead of at the top, and has been gradually working upward; that human powers have had a history of development; that all the elements of culture — as the arts of life, art, science, language, religion, philosophy — have been wrought out by slow and painful efforts, in the conflict between the soul and mind of man on the one hand, and external nature on the other — a conflict in which man has, in favored races and under exceptional conditions of endowment and circumstance, been triumphantly the victor, and is still going on to new conquests. For ourselves, we heartily hold this latter view, deeming it to be established already on a firm basis, soon to be made impregnable; and we regard the other as the mere dream of a psychologist, who, in studying the growth of humanity, descends into the depths of his own being — a being developed in the midst of the highest culture produced by thousands of years of united efforts on the part of the whole race — instead of appealing to the facts of history. Why our author should feel

his conception of the dignity of humanity insulted by the belief that the first men were a prey to necessity, and rose by dint of earnest and persistent endeavor to escape its cruel yoke, we do not precisely see, inasmuch as the great majority of men are still bent beneath that yoke, and the number of those who realize his ideal is hardly more than infinitesimal. It would appear that he must hold the doctrine of a "fall" of the race, mental and moral, in its extreme form.

It is, then, only with a feeling of discouragement, of expectation devoid of hope, that we go on from this capital misapprehension to examine Professor Steinthal's further inquiries into the origin of language. We cannot but fear that here, again, he has mistaken the nature and bearings of the question he undertakes to discuss.

The succeeding paragraph warns us against being content with that half-view of language which would come from our merely regarding it, as well as poetry and the like, with wonder and admiration, as springing forth from the unfathomable depths of human nature, and which might lead us to explain it as the product of an "instinct;" some persons, in fact, having attributed the differences of Semitic and Indo-European speech, as of Semitic monotheism and Indo-European polytheism, to a difference in the linguistic and religious "instincts" of those races respectively; which is declared to be a mere play of words.

For, our author goes on, besides the "recognition of the creative power of man," we have in this century the advantage of a rational psychology, which strives to discover a mechanism in the movements of consciousness, laws in mental life, and so on; since all the creations of man will be found not less subject to the dominion of rational laws than are the productions of nature. Now we also, on our part, expect decided advantage to the study of language, as of every other human production,

from an improved comprehension of the operations of the human mind, as of all the other determining conditions of a difficult problem. But whether the advance of psychology is or is not to bring about a revolution in the science of language, is a question depending on the manner and degree in which language is a "mental production" (*geistiges Erzeugniss*). It is very possible here to fall into the serious error of looking upon words and phrases as an immediate emanation of the mind, and so of settling the laws of mental action, and out of them evolving the events of language-history. The soul of man and its powers and operations are, after all, the mystery of mysteries to us; the phenomena of language are one of its external manifestations, and comparatively a simple matter; the light which these shall cast upon the soul must probably be greater than that which they shall receive from our comprehension of the soul. If the linguistic student, in his devotion to psychology, shall invert this relation, he is very likely to add one more to the already numerous instances in which metaphysics has shown its inaptitude for dealing with facts of observation and induction. Only the result can decide, and that we will proceed to test.

In order, then, to exhibit the complete change of aspect of the question in this century, Professor Steinthal enters upon a detailed comparison between the "invention" of language and that of some product of mechanical ingenuity, as a watch, a steam-engine, gunpowder. And he first points out that men regard the original invention of a thing with much more interest than the succeeding manufacture of the thing invented; since invention is the grand difficulty, while imitation and reproduction are comparatively easy. So people have been talking about the invention of language by the first human beings; and that, even down to the present day; though now they change the name, and style it production instead of in-

vention; the acquisition of speech by children they have regarded as a reproduction or later manufacture. They have, therefore, been curious to ascertain how and when this invention was made. They have wanted to know how Adam and Eve chatted together in Paradise, and, as they had no other way of getting at the desired knowledge, they dreamed it out.

We object *in toto* to this way of opening the inquiry. No one with any sense or learning has, within the memory of this generation, thought of regarding language as a thing invented or produced by anybody at any time. Whom is Steinthal arguing against? Whom does he wish to convince? Is it the shallow theorists of the last century, with here and there a last-century man who has by some mischance failed to get himself yet laid beneath the sod? Surely, there are involved in the origin of language a plenty of real living questions, contended about by live men; it is hardly better than trifling to descend into the sepulchre for one's antagonists. Or can it be that he does not realize the measureless absurdity of the view he is opposing, and that he thinks it calls for rectification rather than summary rejection? We shall see as we go on.

Our author confesses that first invention is more important than later reproduction; but he doubts whether the history of first manufacture is more attractive than that of later or present manufacture. What, at any rate, is more important and more attractive than either is to comprehend the laws of nature which underlie and determine the working of the thing invented, both at the outset and ever since. The latter is merely temporary, and in part even accidental; the former are fundamental and eternal. Whoever knows that a certain monk named Schwarz, experimenting in his laboratory, perhaps in search of the philosopher's stone, invented powder, knows merely anecdotes; suppose another to be ignorant of this,

but to understand the chemical composition and resolution of powder and the reason of the effects it produces, does not this one know what is better worth knowing? So as regards language: "it is more important and more attractive to investigate the laws according to which it both originally lived and subsisted, and at this very day subsists and lives; and to know the specific circumstances under which its first production may have taken place is a matter of less moment."

If, now, a comparison is to be enlightening and instructive, there needs to be at least a degree of analogy between the things compared; and such analogy we must confess ourselves unable here to discover. If there be any man living, or dead since the rise of linguistic science, who holds that language was invented, or produced, or created, or evolved, by an individual, as powder by Schwarz, or the watch by some one else, let him be brought forward that we may stare at him for a wonder, as we do at the *megalonyx* and the *ichthyosaurus;* but do not let us spend paper and ink in reasoning him down. And if we must perforce refute him, let us do it by pointing out the fundamental error of his understanding of language, not by letting that pass unnoticed, and taking exceptions to a point of wholly subordinate consequence. But what, after all, does Steinthal's objection amount to? Simply to this: that it is a grander thing to be a chemist or physicist than to be a student of human culture as exhibited in the history of mechanical inventions. That may be so; it were useless to discuss the question of relative dignity; but, at any rate, the two are quite different, and there is room and occupation for both of them. The historical student does not fully comprehend his task without the help of the physicist to teach him the nature of the practical problems which human ingenuity has solved, one after another; yet he is an independent worker in a separate branch of inquiry, in which the

physicist may be as little versed as he is in physics. In like manner, it may be a far grander thing to be a psychologist than a historical student of language; yet the two are not engaged in the same work, and the eminent psychologist may show himself but a blunderer when he comes to deal with the facts and principles of linguistic history.

Indeed, although Professor Steinthal does not appear to understand the bearing of the comparison with which he is dealing, he goes on to set forth something like what we have just been stating. No single invention, he says, comes without due preparation, consisting in previous inventions and the capacity and insight arising from familiarity with them; and it falls fruitless and is forgotten unless it serves certain definite purposes, founded in the necessities and aspirations of the age in which it makes its appearance. In order to understand the invention of powder or of printing, we need to set the bare facts in relation with the whole history of the times of their production. Undoubtedly; nothing could be plainer than this. And what follows from it? Why, that we study the history of that department of human culture which includes the use of instruments and inventions, comprehensively and in detail, and through the medium of the facts themselves, though at the same time heeding carefully what mechanical science has to say in part explanation of the facts; we trace up invention after invention, inferring, as well as we may in the imperfection of the record, out of what preparation each one grew, and what new conditions it created to favor the production of its successor. And at last, as it now appears, going back from the almost miraculous appliances of modern culture to simpler and simpler instruments, from iron to bronze, from bronze to stone, we find the beginnings of human effort in this direction to have been pebbles and flakes of flint-stone, and rods and clubs of wood; and one grand

department of man's activity, of the utmost importance in its bearings on the progress, mental as well as physical, of the race, is laid before us, most interestingly and instructively, in at least the main outlines of its development. Such knowledge lies outside the sphere of the physicist, and is unattainable by his methods; one might study the laws of mechanical force and of chemical combination till doomsday, without advancing a step nearer to its possession. Thus is it, also, with language. A close and instructive analogy really exists between the two subjects, if rightly looked at; and in failing to discover this, and to put it in place of the other and false analogy, Steinthal has, as it seems to us, failed to draw any valuable result from the whole discussion. What in linguistics corresponds to the invention of a particular machine, or application of force, or useful combination of elements, is not the production of language in general; far from it; it is the production of an individual word or form. Every single item of existing speech had its own separate beginning, a time when it first came into men's use; it had its preparation, in the already subsisting material and usages of speech, and the degree of culture and knowledge in the community where it arose; and it obtained currency and maintained itself in existence because it answered a practical purpose, subserving a felt need of expression. The history of the development of language is nothing more than the sum and result of such single histories as this. The scientific student of language, therefore, sets himself at work to trace out the histories of words and forms, determining, so far as he is able, the chronological place and reason and source of each one, and deriving by induction from the facts thus gathered a comprehension, in no other way attainable, of the gradually advancing condition of mind and state of knowledge of the language-makers and language-users. And if he can determine what, or even of what sort, were the very first

elements of language used by men, and why these instead of other possible elements were used, he has solved the problem of the origin of language; and the history of this other, even grander and more important department of human productiveness, is also laid before us in its main features, though with infinite work yet remaining to be done upon it in detail. All the questions involved in it are primarily historical, to be investigated by studying and comparing the recorded facts of language. Psychology has just as much to do with it as theoretical mechanics and chemistry have to do with the study of human inventions; it is valuable as critic and aid, but worthless as foundation and substitute. Which of all the innumerable events of linguistic history is accessible to us by the *à priori* method? What word or form in any language under the sun could we have prophesied, from the laws of action of the human mind and soul?

We are obliged, accordingly, to dissent utterly from Steinthal's conclusion, which is expressed in these words: "For us, then, the investigation of the origin of language is nothing else than this, to acquaint ourselves with the mental culture which immediately precedes the production of language, to comprehend a state of consciousness and certain relations of the same, conditions under which language must break forth, and then to see what the mind gains by means of it, and how under the government of law it further develops itself." Our author, like others before him, here suffers the psychologist to overbear and replace in him the linguistic scholar; he ignores the essential character of the questions with which he deals, and substitutes subjective for objective methods of investigation. So far as we can see, he breaks not less decidedly with the inductive school of linguistics than he has broken before with the inductive school of anthropology. The origin and history of language is a mere matter of states of mind. Neither here nor anywhere else

in the chapter do we find acknowledgment of the truth that speech is made up of a vast number of items, each one of which has its own time, occasion, and effect, nor anything to show that he does not regard it as an indivisible entity, produced or acquired once for all, so that when, under due favoring conditions, it has "broken forth," it *has* broken forth, and that is the end of the matter: than which, certainly, a grosser error in the view of the historical student of language cannot possibly be committed. If such is to be the result of the full admission of psychology into linguistic investigation, then we can only say, may Heaven defend the science of language from psychology! and let us, too, aid the defense to the best of our ability.

We see pretty clearly, by this time, how much and how little we have to expect from Professor Steinthal toward the solution of the real question of the origin of language. It is important, however, that we continue to follow his reasonings and note to what result they actually come.

He next calls upon us to observe that, as regards the so-called invention of speech, natural laws and mental conditions are one and the same thing. "The mental condition and the relations of consciousness are here the actual forces themselves which produce language." But our observation refuses to show us any such thing. Speech is a body of vocal signs, successions of vibrations produced in the atmosphere by the organs of utterance, and apprehended by the organs of hearing. Are the lungs, the larynx, the tongue, the palate, the teeth, the lips, even the air about us, parts of the mind? If so, what is the body? and what are its acts, as distinguished from those of the mind? So far as we can see, the word *jump* is just as much and just as little an act of the mind as jumping over a fence is; each is an act of the body, executed under direction of the mind indeed, but by

bodily organs, namely the muscles. The mind's immediate products are conceptions, judgments, feelings, volitions, and the like; pyschology, surely, ought to teach that. An utterance is like nothing else in the world so much as a gesture or motion of the arms, hands, fingers. The latter is in like manner the effect of an act of will upon bodily organs that are obedient to the will; it differs only in being brought through another medium, the luminiferous ether, to the cognizance of another receptive organ, the eye. The hands can make an indefinite number of such motions, and combine them in every conceivable variety; and the mind, acting on and developing the hints afforded by what may be called the natural gestures, is capable of using these motions as instrumentalities for the expression of its thoughts; and it does so use them when circumstances limit it to this kind of instrumentality. In like manner, the voice can utter an indefinite number of articulate sounds, and can put them together into combinations practically infinite; and here, again, founding on the natural cries and on imitative sounds (perhaps also on other bases, the whole to an extent and in a manner not yet fully determined, and the determination of which would be the real and final solution of the remaining questions as to the origin of language), the human mind has been able to avail itself of this instrumentality in order to the expression of its acts; and it does so avail itself in every normally constituted human being. There is no more intimate connection between the mind and the articulating apparatus than between it and the fingering apparatus; words are just as extraneous to the mind — only lying within its convenient reach, and so capable of being put to use by it at pleasure — as are twistings of the fingers and brandishings of the arms or feet. These truths seem to us so plain, so self-evident, that we are at a loss to conceive how they can be opposed by any valid argument; we

never have seen anything brought against them that could stand a moment's critical examination. That there is, therefore, any such wide and essential difference as our author would postulate between the material of speech and those purely physical and independently existing substances which the mechanically inventive mind turns to its purposes, does not appear. The difference is in reality great enough, and for that very reason does not require to be exaggerated. To contract it one way, and identify words outright with sticks and stones and metals, is at the least no worse than to stretch it the other way, and to identify them with mental acts.

Steinthal's inferential assumption, then, from which we have necessarily to set forth in order to the further prosecution of our inquiries, is this: "that a certain condition of mental culture must be given, in which there lies a certain material, and which is governed by such laws that speech must necessarily come into being." We should state what of truth there seems to us to be in this in a very different manner, somewhat thus: A certain state of mind being given, consisting in the apprehension of an idea that calls for expression, and in the desire to express it, and a certain material lying ready at hand, or being producible and habitually produced in indefinite quantity, the laws which govern human action in general in the adaptation of means to ends cause the production of an item of speech; and speech in general is made up of such items, so produced. I employ the words *locomotive* and *spectroscope* now simply by imitation, because some one else has employed them before me; the man who first employed them did so because his "mental culture," by reason of the invention of the one or the other instrument, had got into such a "condition" that he wanted a name to call them by; and he knew where to find it. Does Professor Steinthal believe that states of mental culture and laws of consciousness actually pro-

duced the two words in question? We hardly credit it; although it would seem a necessary inference from what he says. Perhaps he would not allow that these are parts of "language" at all, in the peculiar and psychological sense of that term. But we do not know where, in that case, he would stop, in excising and amputating the members of the body of speech. The queer new word *apperception*, which makes such a figure in his writings and in those of his school, would, for aught that we can see, have to go too. More probably, he has never brought his doctrine to the test of actual fact in recent times at all; and he would perhaps claim that productions of words in these modern degenerate days are of a very different character from those of earlier ages. That is to say, he would fly with his pet theory from the clear light of the present into the dimness of the past, and the further back into the dark he got, the more confident he would be of its truth and sufficiency. For our part, we think no explanation of the facts of language which does not account for the nearest present just as well as for the remote past has any good claim to acceptance. Of course, some of the important determining circumstances and conditions have been in constant change since the beginning, and this change requires to be fully allowed for; it is to be read in the antecedent forms of language, as we reconstruct them by taking away, one after another, the productions of the later time. And we need not absolutely deny the possibility that other principles have been at work than those we now perceive working; only, they have to be inductively established before we shall accept them, and not simply "assumed" as part of a doctrine which appears not less inconsistent with the former than with the present phenomena of linguistic growth.

Our author proceeds:—

"This means, then, that language is not an invention, but an orig-

ination or creation in the mind, not a work to which the understanding has furnished the means, not an intentional application of a means sought after and found for the relief of a conscious necessity, nor even the happy turning to account of an accident for the enrichment of mental working (for this also presupposes reflection or consciousness as to the possible utilization of what had thus turned up), but language has come to be without being willed into existence. The laws which, while remaining unconscious, yet govern the elements of consciousness, operate, and execute the creation."

There are statements in this paragraph to which we can yield a partial assent. That men have willed language, as language, into existence, or, in its production, have labored consciously for the enrichment of their mental working, we do not believe, any more than Professor Steinthal does. But consciousness has its various spheres and degrees. The first man who, on being attacked by a wolf, seized a club or a stone and with it crushed his adversary's head, was not conscious that he was commencing a series of acts which would lead finally to rifles and engines, would make man the master (comparatively speaking) instead of the slave of nature, would call out and train some of his noblest powers, and be an essential element in his advancement to culture. He knew nothing either of the laws of association and the creative forces in his own mind that prompted the act, or of the laws of matter which made the weapon accomplish what his fist alone could not. The psychologist and the physicist, between them, can trace out now and state with exactness those laws and forces; can formulate the perceptions and apperceptions and reflex actions on the one hand; can put in terms of *a* and *b* and *x* and *y* the additional power conferred, on the other hand; and can even maintain, as we infer, that those laws and forces and formulas produced the man's act; while all that he himself knew was that he was defending himself in a sudden emergency. We are not loth to admit that all the later

advances in mechanics have been made in a similar way, each to meet some felt necessity, and to seize and realize an advantage which the possession of what had been done before him enabled the inventor to perceive as within his reach; and all the mental progress of the race (which is founded on physical well-being, since there could be no philosophers until there was spare fruit of other men's ruder labors to feed and support them), and all science and art have depended in great part on those advances in mechanics, and have come as their unforeseen results. Professor Steinthal, as we have seen above, does not relish or accept this view, and thinks it a part of the philosophy of the last century. What man does not win directly, by the free play of his inherent creative forces, is to him only such a degradation of human nature as psychology spurns. While he remains in this frame of mind, we have no hope that he will accept our view of the history of origination and development of language, which is closely akin with what we have just laid down respecting that of mechanical invention. Men have not, in truth, produced language reflectively, or even with consciousness of what they were doing; they do not, in general, even so use it after it is produced. The great majority of the human race have no more idea that they are in the habit of "using language," than M. Jourdain had that he "spoke prose;" all they know is that they can and do talk. That is to say, language exists to them for the purpose of communication simply; of its value to the operations of their own minds, of its importance as an element in human culture, of its wonderful intricacy and regularity of structure, nay, even of the distinction of the parts of speech, they have not so much as a faint conception, and would stare in stupid astonishment if you set it forth to them. And we claim that all the other uses and values of language come as unforeseen consequences of its use as a means of communication. The desire of com-

munication is a real living force, to the impelling action of which every human being, in every stage of culture, is accessible; and, so far as we can see, it is the only force that was equal to initiating the process of language-making, as it is also the one that has kept up the process to the present time. It works both consciously and unconsciously: consciously, as regards the immediate end to be attained; unconsciously, as regards the further consequences of the act. When two men of different speech meet, they fall to trying simply to understand one another; so far as this goes, they know well enough what they are about; that they are thus making language they do not know; that is to say, they do not think of it in that light. The man who beckons to his friend across a crowded room, or coughs or *hems* to attract his attention, commits, consciously and yet unconsciously, a rude and rudimentary act of language-making — one analogous doubtless with innumerable acts that preceded the successful initiation of the spoken speech which we have. No one consciously makes language, save he who uses it most reflectively, who has his mind always filled with its character and worth — indeed, hardly even he; perhaps (to take an extreme case) the man who produced *apperception* itself only knew that he was finding a sign for a conception which he had formed, in order to use it as a factor, a kind of x, or π, or O_2, in his reasonings. And so men have gone on from the beginning, always finding a sign for the next idea, stereotyping the conception by a word, and working with it till the call for another came; and the result, at any stage of the process, is the language of that stage. Precisely here, then, is where comes in the operation of those "unconscious laws which govern consciousness," to the direct action of which our author would vainly ascribe the whole production: they shape into a regular and well-ordered whole the congeries of items thus miscellaneously and as it were accidentally

produced; they create out of words a language; they give, in a perfectly unconscious way, that completeness, adaptedness, and proportion which make the instrumentality represent the nature and answer the higher uses of the minds from which it proceeds.

In the creative forces of the human soul, as by their free and spontaneous action the producers of spoken language, we have, then, no faith or belief whatever; indeed, to our unpsychological apprehension, there is something monstrous in the very suggestion or implication that a word is an act of the mind. Conceptions and judgments — these and their like are what the mind forms; for them it finds, under the social impulse to communication, signs, in those acts of the body which experience shows to be best suited to its use; and the sum of these signs is language. Whether we shall call language-making invention, or production, or creation, or giving birth, is quite immaterial, provided we understand what the process really is, and how far it is faithfully represented by any or all of those terms. "Invention" is doubtless a name invested with too much false suggestiveness to be conveniently used; yet we are confident that many of those who have used it were much nearer the truth in their conception of what they thus denominated than is Professor Steinthal. "Growing organism," "unfolding germ," which he goes on in the immediate sequel to apply — though also innocent enough, if employed with a full realization of how far they are figurative merely — are far more dangerously misleading. That they mislead him into some strange ways and hard places, we shall have no difficulty in proving.

He next proceeds, namely, to abolish the distinction which he had before laid down so sharply between the first coming into being of language and its later acquisition by children. That, it appears, was a provisional concession to our weakness; a kind of scaffolding, by the

aid of which we should rise a step in the argument he was constructing. Only, it must be confessed, the scaffolding is to our mind so much more substantial than the main structure, that we shall prefer to cleave to it, and stand or fall with it. Hear him: —

"Respecting language, it has been already observed that it no more admits of being taught and learned than seeing and hearing do. Who, I pray, has ever observed that children were taught to speak? Many a one, however, has perhaps already noticed how vain is the effort sometimes expended in teaching the child. But I assume with certainty that every one who has had occasion to watch a child from the second to the fourth year of life has often enough been astonished to see with what startling suddenness *(wie urplötzlich)* the child has used a word or a form. One seldom knows where the child got that. He has grasped it at some opportunity or other, and to grasp is to create" (*ergreifen heisst erzeugen*)!

Prodigious! Then, doubtless, the man we lately imagined, who "grasped" the stick or stone for purposes of self-defense, really created it; and the said stick or stone was his mental act! If we can go on smoothing away differences and effecting identifications at this rate, we shall soon have all the elements of the discussion reduced to a condition of chaotic nebulosity out of which we may evolve just what suits our individual taste. Seriously, we should not have supposed any man, at this age of the world, capable of penning the sentences we have quoted. To deny that children learn their language from those about them is to abandon definitely and finally the ground of sound reason and common sense. What if you cannot sit down with spectacles on nose, and book and ferule in hand, and "teach" a child to speak? Is that the only way of teaching? Then we do not "learn" a tune, for example, which we have heard from the street-organs till our souls are weary of it; we are simply brought into such a condition of mental culture that our creative forces in their unconscious workings produce the tune. Would this statement be a whit less absurd than that which our

author makes about language? It has even become with us an item of popular wisdom, as attested by a proverb, that example teaches better than precept. Children do, indeed, "grasp" just what they can, what they best understand and are prepared for, of the language which is current in their hearing, and we cannot follow the movements of their minds closely enough to tell beforehand what that will be; although we can act upon the hints their imperfect efforts give us, and help and correct till the step they are striving to take is taken. Does any one before whom some unforeseen new acquisition is blurted out by a child doubt that the child has heard it somewhere, at some time, and is simply reproducing it by imitation? If otherwise, why are not the current expressions of another language sometimes generated by the creative forces of the childish soul? Put the German child, along with its German-speaking parents and brothers and sisters, in an English-speaking community, so that it hears both languages every day, and almost every hour, and it acquires (or produces) both, apparently as well and as easily as it would have acquired (or produced) either alone under other circumstances. Is there nothing like learning there? Then how would Professor Steinthal explain it? But he proceeds: "We have no right whatever, then, to speak of the learning of language on the part of children. For where there is no teaching, there there is no learning." Most true, indeed; there never yet was an effect where there was not a cause. But then we assert with equal confidence, that where there is learning, there there is also teaching; because, where the effect is, there we know there is a cause, if we can only find it; and the cause in this case is not hard to discover, if one will but open his eyes. Further: "What the gardener does with seeds out of which he wishes to rear plants, is all that we do with our children in order to bring them to speech: we bring

them into the necessary conditions of mental growth — namely, into human society. But as little as the gardener makes the seed grow, do we make or teach the child to speak: in accordance with the laws, in one case of nature, in the other of mind, does the flower spring up on the one hand, the language in the consciousness of the child on the other." We are heartily tired, we must say, of these comparisons that go limping along on one foot, or even on hardly the decent stump of a foot, deficient in all the essentials of an instructive analogy, fit only to confuse and mislead. Let Professor Steinthal show us, if he can, one and the same seed which in the forest would send up an oak, in the orchard an apple-tree, in the garden a tulip or an onion, according to the bed in which you planted it, or whose product, if planted in a bed of mingled tulips and onions, would be both a tulip and an onion at the same time; and then we will acknowledge that he has found something analogous with the child that grows up a user of language. What right, again, has he to assume that human society is the one necessary condition of mental growth? Mere physical growth, with the experience and observation it brings, brings also mental growth; but even our author, apparently, does not hold that it would bring language, or certainly not any given language. No; the one thing above all others that human society affords the young child is the opportunity to acquire the form of human culture possessed by that society, of whatsoever kind or degree it may be; and because language is a part of culture, it, too, with all the incalculable advantages it brings, is acquired along with the rest.

Our author here quits for a moment his similitude of a seed, to point out once more "how rude the view was which regarded the invention of language as that of a machine, and the learning to speak of the present day as a new fabrication of an invention previously made."

No doubt; we got past that long ago; only we were less impressed by the rudeness of the view itself than by the inutility of quoting and opposing it, and the helplessness of the reasoning by which it was opposed. If we have got to put in the place of it the view that language is a growing organism or a sprouting germ, we shall wish that we had our old adversary back again. Next, reverting to and adopting an idea which he had in an earlier paragraph expressly repudiated, as a mere "playing with words," he pronounces language an invention to which men were impelled by a mental "instinct," and which is continually reproduced by the same "instinctive" powers; and declares that if we know these latter, we know also the first invention. To this we demur: comprehending the forces in action is a very different thing from comprehending the history of their action, and knowing what were its first products. These same identical forces, in their present observable modes of action, produce some hundreds or thousands of wholly dissimilar linguistic "inventions." Which of all these was the first invention like, or how did it differ from them all? The infinite diversity of human speech ought alone to be a sufficient bar to the assertion that an understanding of the powers of the soul involves the explanation of speech. There are current in the world say a thousand different names for *mind*, or *love*, or *finger*, or *two*, and each of them is current, not among minds of a certain degree of culture everywhere, but within certain geographical limits among minds of every grade; which of them is the product of an instinctive action of mental forces, and which of them could have been determined *à priori* by a knowledge, however penetrating and intimate, of those forces?

Did pine forests, continues Professor Steinthal, have to wait for man to plant them? Did they not grow of old after the same laws as when we now plant them? Then

the language of the first men grew out of a like germ, and by the same laws, with that of every child of the present generation. We have already seen how "rude" this analogy is, and to how little valuable knowledge it conducts us. We pass it here, then, and go on to consider the further arguments by which it is followed up, and which are as extraordinary as anything in this extraordinary chapter.

We quote our author's own words: —

"But, it will be said, the conditions into which the germ fell were not the same, for the children of later generations come into the society of speakers, while the primitive man had to do at first with non-speakers. That is so. Still, from it follows only that the primitive man learned to speak under more unfavorable circumstances than our children now produce their speech; namely, there was wanting to the conditions in which the former lived a single circumstance, the language of the society in which he lived. But this circumstance is not essential.[!] It is human society alone that is indispensable to man. If he has this, he will either learn to speak along with it, in case it is not yet able to speak, or, if it already possesses speech, he will necessarily create his own speech entirely after the analogy of that which his society has."

Here, we acknowledge, Professor Steinthal occupies a position one step nearer the truth than that of those who maintain, or imply, that a solitary man would form a language for himself. But he occupies it only by the sacrifice of consistency. Where are those creative forces of the human soul which the present century has learned to recognize as doing such wonderful things? Shall we push the botanical parallel a little further, and say that the flowers which our "germ" produces are dicœcious, or tricœcious, or polycœcious, and cannot be expected to reproduce from a single individual? The additional strain thus put upon it would be, to our sense at least, hardly perceptible. The burden of proof obviously rests upon those who hold that, while the creative force, as regards language, of the soul A, and the soul B, and the soul C is each equal

to nothing, that of A + B + C is of such immense power that only the nineteenth century has been found able to estimate it. Perhaps if Steinthal would really look into the question otherwise than psychologically, he would find that the only thing which human society furnishes, and which nothing else can furnish, toward the production of language, is the impulse to communication; and that no other inducement than this has operated or can operate to draw out the powers of the human soul in the direction of language, and bring them to action and to consciousness. Where, again, resides the "necessity" which compels the creative soul of each new member of a community to produce a language precisely accordant with that of the community? Individuals of every variety of endowment are born in every community, in every class of the community; why does each one grow up to talk after the same fashion as those with whom he associates; speaking not only their speech, but their dialect, with their limitations, their least peculiarities of tone and phrase, even their mispronunciations and grammatical irregularities and blunders? Here, too, if our author would study the facts and learn what they teach him, instead of trying to get above and domineer them, he might soon convince himself that children really do, as he himself maintained in an earlier part of the chapter, "appropriate" their speech; that they *learn* it, as much as they do mathematics or philosophy, only by a different process.

We quote the remainder of the paragraph, the last which we shall find it necessary to treat thus: —

"With reference to what has been set forth, we can already say what will become yet plainer hereafter; man learns not so much to speak as to understand. Neither the primitive man nor the child of later generations makes or creates language, but it rises and grows in man; he gives it birth (*er gebiert sie*). When it is born, he has to take up his own child, and learn to understand it. The primitive man in the primitive society, like the child in later times, has to learn,

not to speak, but to understand. The latter learns to understand the developed speech of later generations; the former, the language that is just breaking forth, just coming out into the air; and as the child has not created the language which he learns, so also the primitive man learns the primitive speech which he in like manner has not created; which is, rather, only born from the soul of the primitive society."

This may be called the climax of the chapter. We have now our solution of the question complete. Do you ask what was the origin of language? Why, there was once a primitive society, and (more fortunately endowed than "corporations" in our days) it had a primitive soul; and this soul possessed primitive creative powers, which were not possessed by the souls of the individuals composing the community, although these too were creative; and these powers, not by creation, or invention, or making of any kind, but simply obstetrically, gave birth to primitive speech. But that is not the sole origin; the same obstetrical process repeats itself each day in the soul of every new member of the human race; language "originates" anew in every individual. Are you satisfied now?

Could there be more utter mockery than this? We ask for bread, and a stone is thrown us. What have these statements to do with the origin of language? Why all this long talk in order to arrive at a result so simple? We could have conceded at the outset that the powers with which man is endowed are what produces language, and that they are on the whole the same powers in every individual of the race, and powers which, through the whole history of the race, and of language, act on the whole in the same way. Yet their products, in different communities and in different ages of the same community, are exceedingly different. There are thousands of dialects to-day, the speakers of each of which are unintelligible to those of every other; and each is so unlike its own ancestor, from time to time back in the past, that no one

would be intelligible to the speakers of any other. What is the reason of all this? and what was the still earlier and unrecorded condition out of which each, or all together, arose? Respecting each word of every language now existing, we know that it is used by the new individuals born into its community because it was used before, and the new-comer had only to imitate his predecessors, to do as they set him the example. Now what did the first speaking individuals do, who had no predecessors to set them an example? What, or of what kind, were the significant utterances they used, and how did these obtain their significance? To reply to these questions is to determine the origin of language; and Professor Steinthal does not so much as lift his finger toward answering them. He shows the same incapacity of appreciation respecting the main point as we had to notice in regard to one or two preliminary points at the commencement of the discussion. We have a historical inquiry before us, and he wants to force it into a metaphysical form. He ignores all that has been accomplished in our day by the historical study of language; there is not a sentence in the chapter, so far as we have observed, which implies the existence of such a branch of knowledge as comparative philology. Whatever he may have learned and done in that direction, he keeps it out of sight here, and lets us behold only the pyschologist. He ignores all that has been done by anthropology, in tracing out the history of other departments of human culture, and determining the general character of the process of development by which man has become what he is. We can hardly say that his theory is antagonistic to these sciences, or inconsistent with them, so much as that it has nothing in common with them. It belongs to the period before they came into being. Born in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it is nevertheless the child of the eighteenth, or of any earlier century you may choose. There was

needed to produce it only an exalted idea of the creative forces of the human soul; and that, we venture to say, might have been found in at least a few exalted heads among the philosophers of any age. This may be, after all, the deeper reason why it seeks its antagonists among the linguistic theorizers of another century than ours. Views similar to those which we have been sustaining in opposition to it have been within not many years drawn out in a systematic and consistent form, based upon the established facts of linguistic and anthropological science, and extended by inductive methods over the whole ground of linguistic study, from the present time back to the beginning;[1] and here, it might fairly be thought, Professor Steinthal would have found foes better worth contending with, and an opportunity to test the soundness of his views by seeing how effectively they could be made to confront the living and aggressive views of others; but he does not take the slightest notice of them, direct or implied. References, it is true, to other students of language, of any class, are very rare in the volume; the psychologic method is mainly independent of all aid, save from the soul of the investigator.

There remains, however, one more shift of ground for our author to make in the progress of his ratiocination. As he has successively set up the provisional assumptions that language is an invention and a product, and, after reasoning a while upon them, has got above and discarded them, so he now treats in the same way his last thesis, that language is a birth. Noting that speech does not exist in grammar and dictionary, but in the actual use and utterance of men, he pronounces it "no abiding existence, but a fleeting activity." It is "a mere possibility, which under due circumstances expresses itself, is exercised, and then becomes reality, but only for the

[1] The writer may as well confess that he refers here to his own published lectures on *Language and the Study of Language* (New York and London 1867).

moment. . . . . Language is not a something, like powder, but an occurrence, like the explosion; it is not an organ, like the eye and ear, but a capacity and activity, like seeing and hearing." All this, again, is in our opinion very verbiage, mere turbid talk, and mainly growing out of the fact that our author does not distinguish between language as a faculty, or the power to speak, and language as an actual concrete possession, or the set of audible signs which we first hear, then understand, then learn ourselves to make and use. The lack of this distinction underlies a considerable part of the false reasoning of the whole chapter, but it is especially fatal here and in what follows. The fault, it must be confessed, is in no small measure that of language itself. If the terms *sprache* in German, and *speech* and *language* in English, did not apply indifferently to both things, if we were compelled to use one word where we meant the faculty, and another where we meant our current phraseology, the words and forms we make, half the mistaken views of language now in vogue would lose their foundation, and become even transparently absurd. The power to say *water*, and to use it as the sign of a certain conception, is a part of my human nature, shared by me with every normally constituted human being; it is a "capacity and activity," though in a sense so different from those of seeing and hearing that we can only marvel at Professor Steinthal's mentioning them together, and fear that there is unsoundness in his psychology as well as in his linguistic philosophy. Seeing and hearing are capacities with which the will has nothing directly to do; they are passive, receptive; only refrain from shutting our eyes and ears, and visible and audible things cannot but impress the sense, and impress it practically alike in all men; while, on the other hand, an act of the will is necessary to every sound we utter, as much as to every gesture we make. In short, we have here one more of

those unfortunate comparisons of which our author is so prolific in this chapter. But the word *water* is neither a capacity nor an activity; it is a product, not less so than is a machine, though in quite another way; it is capable of being first originated, or produced, or invented, at a given time, and thenceforward reproduced by learning and imitation; it is capable of being described, and depicted, and represented, and set down in a dictionary, and having its use regulated by grammar. Think of a grammar of capacity, a dictionary of activities! And of such products as *water* is all human speech, in the concrete sense of the term, composed. When, then, the paragraph goes on to say, "Such was and is language at all times. The primitive man saw not otherwise, spoke not otherwise than we at the moment when we speak," we answer that the statement is either a truism or a falsity, according as it is understood; and that, as the writer appears to suppose it has both senses, he is partly right and partly wrong; but that the truth is a worthless one, and all the point lies in the part that is false. That the primitive man had a mind like ours and used organs like ours, and that their joint working was after much the same fashion as in us, is so palpably true as to be almost impertinent; but that he said *water*, as we do, and for the reason that he had heard some one else say it, is not true; and we crave to know whether he said anything when he had formed the conception of water (a conception which he was fully capable of forming without speech); and, if he did, what it was, and why.

That which follows is in the same strain. There is, we are told, absolutely no essential distinction between the original creation of language, the process of children's learning to speak, and the speaking which now goes on daily and hourly everywhere where human beings are to be found. There is no origin of language, otherwise than as it originates anew in every word we utter. And

now all is finished. To adopt one of our author's favorite comparisons, the question of origin is not a substantial thing, like powder; it is a mere fleeting aspect, like the explosion; a little smouch, a momentary bad smell, and it is over; we are left with only the mortification of having concerned ourselves so long about a matter in which there was absolutely nothing.

Here, for the first time, Professor Steinthal is seized with a slight misgiving. May not his conclusions strike some persons as paradoxical? May it not appear that he arrives at this general identification of everything in language by ignoring essential distinctions? We seem to hear from his readers one universal cry of assent. But it does not reach his ears; and he proceeds to reason down his misgiving, after his peculiar fashion. Accepting, apparently, as impregnably established the general impression that there must be something deep and wonderful about the origin of language, he endeavors to remove any possible scruples on our part as to the identity of everything else with it, by proving that these everythings are also deep and wonderful, each in its way. In the first place, he assumes that any one of us who is profound enough will have already convinced himself that children's learning to speak is just as mysterious as the primitive man's creation of speech. We confess, however, that we are not profound enough for that; that the acquisition of language by children does not seem to us any mystery at all. We stand in an attitude of constant wonder and admiration before the human mind, with its wealth of endowments, its infinite acquirements, and the unlimited possibilities of its future; but that a child, after hearing a certain word used some scores or hundreds of times, comes to understand what it means, and then, a little later, to pronounce and use it, perhaps feebly and blunderingly at first — this does not seem to us any more astonishing than the exercise of the same child's

capacities in other directions; in acquiring, for instance, the command of a musical instrument, or mastering the intricacies of mathematics. Our admiration is called out in a much higher degree by considering what this simple instrumentality finally comes to be in the matured man, what power it gives him over himself and others, and the secrets of the world about him. And we wonder most of all when we consider the history of language, and see how its growth has gone hand in hand with the cultural development of the race, at once the result and the efficient aid of the latter. In fact, we think our appreciation of the wondrous character of language a vastly higher one than Professor Steinthal's; for, while he holds that any two or three human beings, putting their heads together, in any age and under any circumstances, not only can, but of necessity must, produce it in all its essential features, we think it a possible result only of the accumulated labors of a series of generations, working on step by step, making every acquired item the means of new acquisitions.

But let us see what he has to say in the way of setting forth the deep mystery of our daily speech, that we may be thereby led to regard ourselves as the true originators of language. "Only notice how, on the one hand, a person speaking in a strange tongue, *with which he is not very familiar*, gathers the words laboriously together in his memory and combines them with reflection; and how, on the other hand, when we use our mother tongue, the words flow in upon us one after another in right order and in proper form." Well, we notice it, as directed; but we fail to see the mystery. On the contrary, we think our author has unwittingly solved the whole problem by the suggestion which we have italicized; the one language is familiar, the other is not. So the practised pianist sits down at his instrument with a sheet of dots and lines before him, which to another are devoid of all

meaning, a mere intricate puzzle; and his fingers move over the white and black keys as if they went of themselves, without the direction of his will, and the puzzle is translated, at first sight, into ravishing music. But give him a new-fangled method of notation, "with which he is not familiar," and turn his key-board the other way, so that the tones go down in the scale from left to right — and behold, how changed! now he labors painfully from note to note, stumbling and tripping at every step. Or change the mathematician's whole system of signs and symbols, and see what a weight you have hung at his heels, until he shall have worn it out by sheer dint of dragging it over hard places. Let one pass, however, a series of years in complete divorcement from his mother tongue, and in the enforced daily and hourly practice of another, and the balance of familiarity is shifted; the latter becomes the one which he wields with ease and adroitness, the former the one in whose use he stumbles, and has to labor and reflect. Is there anything in all this that is not fully explainable on the supposition that language is an acquired instrumentality? Is there, indeed, anything that is explainable on any other supposition? Here, once more, as it appears to us, our author has failed to see the point of his illustration, and draws from it an unwarranted conclusion. All our readiness to appreciate the wonders of language will not lead us to see anything marvelous in the fact that one manages a great and intricate instrumentality with which he is familiar better than one with which he is unfamiliar. Next we are called upon to observe that the difficulties and imperfections of some men's expression in their own mother tongue show us how admirable is that gift of speech by which the word flows forth of itself. Very well; but what follows further? Simply that men's gifts are various. Just so, while one person becomes a renowned *maestro*, another can never learn to be more than a passable pianist, if even

that; and there is an immense difference in the skill and effect with which two individuals will wield the resources of the higher mathematics. We by no means jump from this to the conclusion that music and mathematics did not have their weak beginnings and their slow development, and that the living musician or mathematician is in essentially the same position with every one of his craft from the beginning, and really produces or brings to birth all that they have recorded for him to learn.

And so our author goes on from item to item, where it would be tedious to follow him; everywhere missing the true analogy and suggesting in its place a false one, and therefore deducing from it an argument which is overthrown as soon as stated. We will pass over all of them excepting the last, where he points out that "many a one who at other times is but a stammerer, becomes eloquent when he falls under the influence of passion (*in Leidenschaft gerät*). Just in an excited condition of mind, then, when the clearness of his consciousness is diminished, when he is carried away, the fount of speech flows fullest; for [reverting suddenly to his favorite obstetrical parallel], the more painful the labor, the easier the birth." Disregarding the slightly paradoxical character of the last statement (as if the labor were not a part of the process of birth itself), as well as the characteristic weakness of the comparison in the essential point (for, to make it good, a violent headache, or severe wrenches of rheumatism, or a sound whipping, ought to make an easy birth), we would urge in reply that excitement, up to a certain point, has never been looked upon as dulling the powers of action, either mental or physical. The man who in the exaltation of passion would show a capacity of doing and daring, of exerting powers of attack and defense, of judging and deciding, which in his cooler moments he never dreamed himself to possess, need not feel that there is anything mysterious in his heightened power of ex-

pression under such circumstances. If he can wield the club or discourse upon the musical instrument the better for his passion, he may also better wield the word, without our needing to infer thence that the word is anything more than the instrument of the mind's acts. This, of course, without implying that there are not kinds and degrees of passion which may lame one's powers, either of speech or of action.

We must pronounce, then, Professor Steinthal's attempt to explain away the paradoxical character of his universal identification a complete failure, a mere continuation of the same delusive reasonings by which he originally arrived at it.

After all this he declines to maintain "that, notwithstanding the essential likeness between the speaking of the primitive man and that of the child and the adult, there are not also, on the other hand, accompanying conditions which modify these three processes, and give to each a peculiar character. Only the differences cannot be understood except on the basis of the similarity." And so, it was necessary to lay down as a foundation that speech is always a creation, its origin the eternal and unchangeable origin of a power and activity in the consciousness of men; then to proceed to find the point of mental development at which speech necessarily breaks forth, and, to this end, to plunge into a psychological development of the processes of human thought. Accordingly, the title of the first succeeding part is "Psychical Mechanics," followed later by "History of Psychical Development."

That this is a direct reversal of the true process we are fully convinced. We repeat in summary the truths which we have endeavored above to establish: that language in the concrete sense, the sum of words and phrases by which any man expresses his thought, is a historical product, and must be studied, before all and above all, in a

historical method. The mental development which it accompanies, and of which it is at once the result and the aiding cause or instrument, is also a historical one, and involves among its elements the whole sum of human knowledge and variety of human institutions. The soul of man has grown from what it was once only potentially to what it is now actually, only by means of its own gradual accumulations of observation and reasoning, of experience and deduction. This historical growth is not to be read in the growth at the present day of an individual soul, surrounded from its birth by all the appliances of culture, with instructors on every hand, with the results of others' labors piled about it for it to grasp, in a profusion that defies its highest powers of acquisition. It is to be read only in the recorded and inferable facts of human history itself; these are to be first striven after and determined by every possible means; and from these we are to reason back to the states of mind that produced them. Doubtless a comprehension of the workings of the human soul under its present conditions will be an aid of high importance, but it will be only an aid. As well found the study of the history of astronomy on that of the laws of planetary perturbations as the study of the history of language on psychology. Psychology may be a valuable handmaid to linguistic science, but it must be a harmful mistress; it may follow alongside of historical investigation, guarding and checking every conclusion, but it has no right to claim to go on in advance and lead the way.

Or, if the case be not so, let it be shown to be otherwise; only do not ask us to accept the reasonings of this chapter, or anything like them, as in the least degree proving it otherwise. If this is the best that can be said in behalf of what we may call the psychologico-obstetrical theory of language, then that theory is an irretrievable failure. We have gone through our author's reasonings in detail, quoting in his own words all the principal

passages, that there might be no chance of our misinterpreting his meaning, or of omitting what was essential to the right understanding of the rest; and it is seen with what result. We have not found telling expositions, arguments generally sound and cogent, with here and there a slip or a flaw; we have found nothing but mistaken facts and erroneous deductions. The chapter is not entitled to be called able; even a false doctrine ought to admit of a better defense; we almost feel that we ought to apologize for occupying with its refutation so much of the time of our readers. But we know not where to find at present anything better on this side. Steinthal would, we imagine, be put forward by his party as their strongest man. It is, then, as the representative of a school and a tendency in linguistics that we have taken him up; to show how laming and disabling is the system and method in which he, with his coadjutors, works. Some will say, doubtless, that the fault lies with the metaphysical attitude of mind; that the metaphysician, in his efforts to get into the *à priori* position, to face and dominate his facts, really turns his back upon the foremost of them, as they surround him and drag him on in the opposite direction to that in which he fancies himself to be moving. We would not go so far as that; we are willing to allow, at least provisionally, that metaphysical inquiry carries one up into heights and down into depths that are not otherwise attainable, and that in its pursuit is the loftiest exertion and the keenest enjoyment of which man is capable; the metaphysicians say so, and surely they ought to know. We only demand that when they come down, or up, on to middle ground, when they take hold of matters that lie within the ken of common sense, their views and conclusions shall square with those of common sense; or, if it be not so, that they shall be able to show us why it is not, and to convince our common sense by their uncommon. The upholders of views akin with Steinthal's

and scientific studies which is now in lively, not to say violent, progress. At its liveliness, or violence, no friend of education need feel alarm. We are used to seeing the desirable result brought about by the collision of opposing influences. If even our staid earth cannot be kept plodding her round about the sun except by the discordant concord of two forces, whereof the one would plunge her headlong into the fiery photosphere of the central orb, the other hurry her away to the frigid regions of measureless space, we cannot well expect anything better in the more jarring and ill-regulated counsels of men. No speedy reconciliation of views upon the matters here in dispute is to be looked for, if, indeed, it shall ever be reached. But it may be at least brought nearer, if we can arrive at a better understanding of the principles which are involved in the controversy, and upon which its settlement must in part depend. There is perhaps room, without entering into anything like a polemical discussion, to draw out some of those principles and put them in a clearer light. And, since language has been in a manner placed on its defense by the extremists of the one side, who are disposed to treat with contumely its claims as an agency in education, we may profitably endeavor to take such a view of education on the one hand and of language on the other as shall show us what is the relation of the latter to the former, and what the place of linguistic and philological study in the general scheme of human training.

Education is something essentially and exclusively human. There is nothing of it, there is nothing analogous with it, among the lower animals. These, indeed, have their powers gradually developed, but only by a force acting from within; Nature herself is their sole instructor. The old bird does not teach her young ones to fly or to sing; at the utmost, she watches with a degree of conscious interest the growth of their capacities; and the

result is the same, whether they come forward in freedom under her eye, or in the confinement of cage and aviary. In man, too, there is a drawing out of innate powers; no one can be made by education anything but what nature has given him the capacity to become; but it is through the process of instruction by his fellows, of communication from without, of appropriation on his part, under guidance, of the results of others' labors. That development which among the less favored races of beings reaches its monotonous height in each individual has been in man a protracted historical process, a slow and painful rise from step to step, an accumulation to which every generation between our own and the first fathers of mankind has contributed its mite; and which is still going on in the same way. The educated man is one who is not left to himself to discover and train his own powers, but is kindly taken by the hand and led forward to the possession of all he can grasp and use of the wealth garnered by his predecessors. The sum of this garnered wealth we call *human culture;* to become endowed with it as his own individual patrimony is the highest privilege, the duty, of each individual, and to put him in possession of it is the aim of education. Education seeks to make the career of the individual an infinitely abbreviated epitome of that of the race, to carry him at lightning speed over the ground toilsomely traversed by those who came before him, to raise him in a few years to the height which it has cost them scores of centuries to attain. But the whole store of human culture, in all its constituent details, has long been far too vast for any one to think of appropriating; the utmost that can be hoped for is to gain its sum and effect, its most valuable results, and to be placed in apprehensive sympathy with it all, so as to feel its worth in one's self and to be exalted by it. And this virtual effect of universal knowledge, as lying within the reach and applicable to the uses of each man, we call

individual culture; it is not precisely knowledge, though founded on and representing knowledge; it is knowledge generalized and utilized; it is the sum of the improving and enlightening influences exerted upon us from without. Many of its essentials are won along with but a small part of the details of knowledge, and even in a kind of unconscious way, through the training influence of our surroundings; through the adoption of habits and institutions which, although we do not realize it, are founded on wide knowledge and long experience; through cultivated manners and self-government, imposed by the usages of society; through principles of morality and rules of conduct representing the enlightenment of conscience; through general views, opinions, and beliefs, accepted upon trust, and perhaps never fully tested.

The mere endowment and elevation of the individual, however, his shaping-out (*Ausbildung*), as the Germans call it, though the first and most proper end of education, is not the only one. Culture could not even be maintained thus at the height it has reached; and, like a ball sent rolling up an inclined plane, the moment progress was brought fully to a stop, motion downward would set in. If men's energies were directed to the complete acquisition of all that the past has produced, they would be found unequal to the task, and retrogression, perhaps even to the dead level of savage life — the state of nature, as we call it — could not fail to be the result. And we owe to our successors not merely the maintenance, but also the extension, of the basis of individual culture. We owe it to ourselves as well, since the highest intellectual pleasure of which man is capable is that of mental production, of adding to the general store of human knowledge. This requires that, after laying a certain wider foundation, we throw ourselves into some particular branch, or even some minute branchlet, of knowledge, advancing there as far as the furthest have gone, and

pushing beyond them. We give up something of our general culture in order to become specialists, endeavoring to repay to those who come after a part of our debt to those who have gone before. A certain taint of selfishness clings to him who does not follow such a course. A certain taint of dilettanteism also; for he who limits himself to gathering up others' results, without going down to the very processes by which those results were won, and winning others, so as to know whence culture comes, and how, and, by being profoundly learned in one thing, to appreciate the cost and value of learning everywhere, can hardly lay claim to the possession of high culture at all.

Moreover, there is another and a sterner reason why we may not devote ourselves to self-improvement as our sole occupation in life. The lower wants of our nature are clamorous for satisfaction, and will not be put off. Men must eat and drink, and be clothed and housed; and in ministering to these necessities the greatly preponderating part of human labor must forever be engaged. The struggle for existence is severe; none can live without something of that knowledge which is power; none can live without the aid of his fellows, and without buying this aid by in his turn helping them; he must work, striving to give to his work the highest value. We know well, too, that this external incitement is necessary to our progress. We are not wise and pure enough to do without it. In the sweat of our brow we are condemned to eat our bread; in the same bitter broth we have also to partake of the other and higher enjoyments that life brings us. The interlacings and reciprocal influences of the lower selfishness, which seeks the animal comfort of the individual, and the higher, which seeks his intellectual and moral advancement, or which seeks the welfare of others, or of the race, even at the sacrifice of self, are infinitely various, and intricate beyond the

still constitute — as we hold, merely by force of tradition from the centuries of darkness — the largest and most influential body of writers on the theory of language, and they look down with contempt upon the opposing party as lost in the mazes of superficiality and philistinism. In our view, their profundity is merely subjective, and their whole system is destined to be swept away and succeeded by the scientific, the inductive. This alone is in unison with the best tendencies of modern thought; this alone can bring the science of language into harmonious alliance with the other branches of knowledge respecting man, his endowments, and his history.

XIII.

LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION.

OUR American system of education is one which, on many accounts, we regard with a just pride. Its glory is its broad and democratic foundation, in the measurable instruction and enlightenment of the whole people, of all conditions and of both sexes. It rests upon a thorough and comprehensive humanity, which denies no one his equal rights to happiness, and seeks to advance the interests of all. The free public school, and the use that is made of it, constitute the most important of our institutions. Though not so perfected in its details as the common school of more than one older country, ours attains, upon the whole, better and higher results than any other, because it is a more integral and harmonious part of our general polity than they of theirs; because the inducements to self-improvement, the rewards offered to intelligence, are greater here than elsewhere. But, fair as is the show it makes to those who look on from without, those who have most to do with its management know best its many and serious defects, know the amount of indifference and abuse, of bad attendance, bad teaching, bad superintendence it involves, the waste in it of effort which, if better directed, might produce far better fruits. Even in the oldest States, a great deal of earnest thinking and skillful handling has to be constantly applied to the great machine of popular instruction, to keep it in motion and to improve its effectiveness; and there are

vast regions of our country where even the weakest and worst managed system of which we in New England know aught by experience would be an immense gain and blessing. We cannot wish too heartily, or work too earnestly, for the success of all effort toward the improvement of the lowest grades of education, since upon them depends most directly our safety as a nation. We have undertaken to let our government and the constitution of our society represent the average of virtue and intelligence in the whole community; we cannot now abandon the plan, if we would; and we ought not to flinch from it, if we could: but it is an undertaking fraught with danger; we shall tear one another in pieces if we do not succeed in restraining and transmuting, by educational influences, the aggressive selfishness of individuals and communities, of wider but limited classes, and of associations. Men will strive after what seems to them happiness; and to raise the ideal of individual happiness, to make men really love better things, is the object at which we are directly to aim, if we would benefit and save our country.

These are truisms, perhaps; but their importance is such that they cannot be too often or too persistently brought forward and urged.

In order to help the cause of popular education, we do not need to take hold of it directly; for its progress depends in no small degree on that of the higher education. The whole system is a connected unity, and that which lifts the superior departments tends also to raise all the rest. Now our higher institutions are in no more satisfying condition than our lower; they are even less fitted to bear comparison with those of other countries. This need not be said in a fault-finding spirit; such a state of things is an unavoidable result of our history and present condition of progress, and will be improved when we as a community are prepared for its improvement. To build up great universities out of hand among us is as

impossible as to build up art galleries rivaling those of Europe: nay, far more so; since a university is an animated organism, only to be called into being by lively needs and sustained by living forces; it cannot be constituted and then left to subsist until the nation shall grow up to the use of it. Our colleges and so-called universities are possible universities in the germ; agencies of great value, and doing the work which needs to be done, and which they have undertaken to do, in a far better manner than if they were to adopt the style and methods of real universities; some of them will by degrees expand and develop until they are able to assume the superior office. By a university we mean, of course, a highest institution of learning, according to that ideal which is more nearly realized in Germany than elsewhere; a body of eminent teachers, with such external apparatus, of trustees, buildings, collections, and the like, as is needed to give their work its highest efficiency; teachers who are also investigators, actively engaged in the pursuit of knowledge, for its own sake and for the sake of its communication to others: men whose business is equally the increase and the diffusion of culture; who represent in all departments of study the highest that has yet been attained, and to whom learners can resort, not merely to follow out a prescribed course, but to obtain in any given branch the most efficient help, the furthest advancement as preparation for independent labor.

A new force, however, has lately come in to help determine the development of our educational system: it is what we ordinarily call "modern science." A class of studies is crowding itself upon the attention of educators which but recently had hardly an existence. Its claim has naturally been challenged by the branches of knowledge which were already in possession of the ground, and with whose spirit its own appeared to be more or less at variance. Thus has arisen that contest between classical

power of philosophy to unravel. Endowed and privileged castes, raised above the necessity of labor, degenerate and die out. And those who are not consciously at work to help their fellow-men fail of the very highest pleasure within men's reach, one that no mere intellectual gratification can pretend to rival.

These causes exert upon education a doubly modifying effect. In the first place, its end is in a manner divided into two, connected and yet separate; namely, general culture, and special culture or training: that which enriches the man himself, raising him up toward or to the level of his age; and that which, in addition, equips him for his special life-work. Neither can be left out of sight in shaping the general system or the particular course of education: it can only be made a question when the one shall supplant the other — or rather, shall prevail over the other: since both may and should be followed by us as long as we live.

For, in the second place, the time of education is also affected. Life is divided into two parts, in one of which we are chiefly learners, in the other chiefly workers. First, as we say, we get our education, acquire our profession; then we practise, put to use what we have learned. This common statement, it is true, exaggerates the difference; for, as we have just seen, our whole life should be a continuous process of education, as it may also begin very early to be actively productive. There is merely a kind of polarity induced in it by circumstances; preparation prevails over application at the former end, application over preparation at the latter. For a time we are borne upon the hands of others, and our every want supplied; nothing but growth is expected of us; then (unless we are of those unfortunates who have to grapple with the hard necessities of life from the very outset) the way is still made easy for us a little longer, while we are getting ready to play our independent parts in life.

Thus our earlier years, in comparison with the later, are chiefly preparatory; they are spent in laying foundations: on the one hand, for general culture, on the other hand, for special training. How the time is shared between these two purposes has to be determined by the circumstances and tastes of each person, and by the offered facilities and demands of each community. A higher standard of education implies a longer period devoted to the former, and a superior grade of culture reached. The highest or ideal grade is one which should enable us to overlook the whole field of human knowledge, so as to understand the position and relations of every part, to appreciate the nature and degree of its importance, and to sympathize with its progress. But, besides that this ideal grade is attainable by none save the strongest and most gifted natures, such approach to it as is within each one's power can only be the result of a whole life of training under the most favoring circumstances; and we have, moreover, deliberately to sacrifice a part of it in favor of our life-work, only being careful to cast our youthful studies in such a form as shall best lead the way to our obtaining thereafter whatever our capacities and our situation in life shall put within our reach. And this necessity of making a selection and laying a foundation, of getting ready for what is to be done later, is the circumstance that gives to education in its narrower sense, to school instruction, its disciplinary character.

Upon this point we must dwell a little; for discipline is a word with which not a little conjuring is done nowadays by men who fail to understand fully what it means. It is often spoken or written of as if it were by itself an end, or at least the means to an end; as if it were something quite unconnected with the acquisition of valuable knowledge; as if the acquisition of certain kinds of knowledge always gave discipline, while that of other kinds did

not; and so on. Now, properly speaking, culture and training are the only ends, and the acquisition of knowledge the only means to them, while the position of discipline is rather that of a method. The essence of discipline is simply preparation; that is a disciplinary study which duly leads the way to something that is to come after. He who sets up discipline and knowledge as opposed to and excluding each other wholly misapprehends their mutual relations, and casts the advantage into the hands of his adversaries. In reality, the connection and interdependence of the two are complete. No discipline without valuable knowledge acquired; all valuable knowledge available for discipline; the discipline in proportion to the amount and value of the knowledge acquired; these are fundamental truths in the theory of education.

Only, of course, the degree of value of any given knowledge is not absolute, but relative. One kind of knowledge is worth more to men in general; another to a particular learner, in view of his natural disposition, his past studies, or his plans for the future; one kind is worth more than another at a certain stage of education; one kind should be taught in a certain manner and extent, another in another. The disciplinary method implies that the instructor, viewing the whole body of knowledge, in its connections and applications, will bring before his pupil's mind the right kind, at the right time, to secure the best result in the end.

Equally of course, the method can never be carried out in ideal perfection. It involves an amount of study of the wants of each particular scholar which is but rarely practicable, an amount of skill and foresight which human instructors cannot attain. It is most nearly realized, perhaps, in the case of the young prince, born to rule a kingdom, for whom the best masters in every department can be engaged, and changed, under the direction of some

wise manager, whose whole mind is devoted to the task. Yet, even here, the gravest errors and failures are more than possible; and, in less favorable conditions, the degree of success is liable to be proportionately less. Our general systems of instruction, by classes, with established courses, are at their best only hit-or-miss affairs. Many a pupil is spoiled, as scholar and as man, whom a different treatment would have saved. And hardly one grows up to eminence, or even to moderate success, who has not to look back with regret to labor misdirected, and time lost by being honestly and diligently misspent. This in no wise constitutes a condemnation of the system; it is simply a result of the imperfection of human endeavor, and irremediable. There is no wisdom at command to render it otherwise; the lessons of experience are as costly as they are valuable. But a recognition of the fact should save us from excessive faith in any given system, or from the adoption and maintenance of a single rigid system, to be imposed upon all learners. The field of universal knowledge, as compared with the capacity of the individual learner, is infinite; and not all minds need reap the essentials of culture off the same part of it. We should not be too distrustful of consulting the taste of a pupil, because it may lead him to pass by unheeded something of which we know and feel the value.

For, sooner or later in the process even of general education, the pupil himself has to be taken into the counsels of those who direct his course. The young child, indeed, can be set at what you will, and kept to his task, however disagreeable it may be, by pains and penalties; the old-fashioned motive-power of the rod and ferule has made many a good scholar and true lover of learning — although the ideal educator is one who, without swerving from his disciplinary course, yet contrives to make it all the way alluring. But this childish method of compulsion cannot be kept up to the end of school training, lest the great

object aimed at be endangered or lost. That education is a failure which is felt throughout, or mainly, as drudgery, for all effort to acquire will cease when the pressure of constraint is removed: and this is a result of all others to be deplored; nothing that leads to such a catastrophe has any right to be called disciplinary. It may be made a question in each particular case how soon and how far the pupil's disposition shall be humored. No doubt there is often the highest and best discipline in good hard drudgery, in crushing out or transforming a decided liking or disliking, when the character under treatment is of a temper to bear such forcing; and there is always a due medium between a facile giving way to indolence or idle preference and a wise yielding to the natural bent. But no one should be managed as if he were going to be forever in the hands of tutors and governors, and could be made to do what they willed till the end of life; when he undertakes the care of himself, he must be ready for it, not merely as having learned to apply his powers, but as having felt the reward and enjoyment that comes from their application. If he is to be a man of culture, he must quit school and go forth to his life-work with a generous capital of valuable knowledge of which he feels the value, informed of the sources of knowledge and trained in the ways in which it has been and is to be won, realizing in some measure what there is in the world worth knowing, and craving to know it. Then, indeed, the process of a life-long education has been properly begun, and may be trusted to go on by itself to the end.

Our view of education, it will be noticed, excludes the element of intellectual gymnastics, of exercise for the mere sake of exercise, with indifference to the value of the subject-matter, or with preference (as some would even have it) for that which is and must ever continue to be unpractical and useless. No worse error, surely, can be committed than that of founding education upon

such mock work; it is a running completely into the ground (to use a phrase more expressive, perhaps, than elegant) of the true disciplinary idea, that we are, in the season of preparation, to acquire knowledge in view of its prospective rather than of its immediate value. The human mind is not a mill which is going to grind grain famously by and by if you practise it in grinding gravel-stones now: it can do no real work upon anything but realities; it must acquire in order to produce; it can only give out of such as is put into it. It is a store-house as well, which a disciplinary education fills systematically and carefully, blocking up none of the entrances or passageways by crowding, packing at the bottom those things which should go lowest that others may rest upon them, setting everything in connection with its proper belongings, and leaving always more room, instead of less, because the receptacle, if rightly treated, is indefinitely extensible in every direction; because, if the foundation be made broad and firm enough, we may build securely up to heaven. The rooms should not be filled with rubbish, to lie neglected or to be turned out again; time and space are both too precious for that. Nor must too much even of valuable material be carted in in bulk, to be left unarranged, and at last, perhaps, to fall into hopeless and choking confusion. But most of all, it is not to be filled up with frames and shapes, having the show of solidity but not its substance, and whose hollowness shall some time lead to the disorder and downfall of what is stored about and upon them. Of the various kinds of cram, by far the worst is that which crowds in prematurely the derived results of learning, inferences and beliefs, systems and general truths. This is the strong meat that must not be set before babes. The young mind has a wonderful appetite for bare facts, and not an unhealthy one, since its power of digestion is equally wonderful. It pushes its inquiries eagerly in every di-

rection; its ever-repeated demand is, "What is that?" and if it shows signs of a deeper curiosity by also asking "Why?" it is satisfied with the most superficial explanation, while it hurries on to new information. It is content to take everything in the form of facts, while the older and more trained intellect craves to see the reason and the bearings, and is averse to receiving aught that it cannot set in connection with truths already stored, or bring under categories already established.

To teach first, therefore, facts, items of positive knowledge, and then lead the mind on by degrees to their connections and relations, to generalization and inferences, is the method that nature prescribes for imparting knowledge; and it is also the truly disciplinary method. It is a copy of that by which the highest results of knowledge have been gained, and it prepares both for appreciating and for adding to those results. The whole body of culture, in every department, is founded upon facts; they are the necessary mental pabulum by whose digestion is to be worked out in every mind, as it has been worked out in the history of the race, the complete organic structure of wisdom and culture. Those who jeer at "barren facts" as means of education speak without book. Every fact, of whatever kind, is in itself, indeed, a barren thing; its relations and consequences make it fruitful; but these are only to be reached after it is learned. For instance, we teach our children, in the way of discipline, to conjugate a Latin verb: what drier and more unattractive fact can be put before the mind of the young pupil than that a certain people of whom he knows nothing, at a time in the past of which he can form no conception, said *amo* when they wished to express what we express by *I love?* It is only the instructor who knows that the drudgery of acquiring such facts will be rewarded, by and by, by the results they will yield. The same is true of the multiplication-table, of the items of historical and geo-

graphical knowledge, of points of structure in plants and animals, of the details of constitution and properties in the substances about us. The mere piling in of knowledge, without making it lead on to something more and different, is as useless for discipline in any one of these departments as in the others. We do not, because the Latin verb is a valuable means of discipline, follow it up with the Hungarian verb, the Basque, the Choctaw, although in itself, for an exercise in mental gymnastics, each of these last is as valuable as the first. We should as soon think, when the child has mastered the pothooks and hangers which are to train his hand duly for the formation of English letters, of proceeding to teach him the elements of the Arabic and Chinese alphabets, instead of carrying him on to English writing. If the time given to education were to be spent in training the intellect to perform certain processes deftly, without regard to the materials it dealt with, men would be turned out to the duties of life wholly unfitted to cope with them. You cannot put the judgment in position to act, without informing the mind; give it upon any subject facts enough, duly arranged, and it will, with such force of insight as it naturally possesses, see their relations and draw the conclusions they suggest; teach it not to try to act without the utmost possible collection and arrangement of its facts, and you have given it the most valuable lesson it can receive. We know and acknowledge in practice that the judgment is competent to deal only with matters in which it is well versed; that is to say, where it knows thoroughly the facts involved and their relations, and is used to combining them. The greatest scholar is comparatively weak off his own ground, and, knowing his weakness, is modest and timid; it is only the sciolist who, having obtained a smattering of knowledge in one or two departments, fancies himself capable of rendering a valuable opinion upon any point that can be brought before

of that of the race, stretching our individual littleness into the larger dimensions of collective human nature. Almost all that is done for us by others, outside the narrow circle with which we come in personal contact, almost all, indeed, which is done within that circle itself, is done through language. And the same instrumentality, of course, is to serve us in the exercising of our influence upon others. The work we do for our contemporaries and our successors has to be performed, in great part, in and through language. Our receiving and our giving take place by one channel.

All this, however, may seem to have but little bearing upon the subject of education in the narrower sense of school work, of preparation made under instructors for the work of life. Of course, it will be said, every one must learn his own mother tongue, as the foundation upon which everything else is to be built; there can be no question as to the necessity of the discipline which its acquisition brings; but it comes by a kind of natural and unconscious process; it is very different from what is won by direct study. The objection is not altogether well founded. We are not prepared to inquire what the study of foreign languages is to do for us, until we have seen clearly what our own is worth to us, and how; for the learning of a foreign tongue is but the repetition, under other circumstances, of the learning of our own; and what fruit the one yields is of the same kind with that derived from the other. Great as is the difference of the two cases (consisting chiefly in the fact that that training of the consciousness and reasoning powers which is involved in learning to speak at all is done once for all, in the main, and does not admit of being repeated), it is one of degree and circumstance only. One language is in itself as much extraneous to our mental acts as another. As a part of acquired and acquirable culture, our speech is determined by the particular advantages which we enjoy. With a

change of surroundings during childhood, we should have made French, or Turkish, or Chinese, or Dakota, our "mother tongue," and looked upon English as the strange jargon which we must acquire artificially. We may even now, if we choose, and if our present habits of thought and of articulation are not too firmly fixed upon us, make ourselves so at home in any one of the tongues just mentioned, that it shall become to us more native than English. There can be, therefore, no peculiar and magical effect derived from the addition to the body of signs for thought with which we are already familiar of another body of signs, used now or in the past by some other community; it is simply a continuing and supplementing of the possession we already enjoy — wealth added to wealth.

How far it is desirable or necessary thus to continue and supplement one's natively acquired possession will naturally depend, in no small measure, upon the amount of wealth gained with the latter. The Polynesian or African, for example, who should wish to rise to the level of the best culture of the day, could climb but a very little way by the help of his own dialect. When this had done its utmost for him, he would, though raised greatly above what he could have been without it, still be far down in the scale of human development, and with a sadly limited space for further growth opened to him. Let him add English to his possessions, and his horizon would be inconceivably expanded; his way would be clear to more than he could ever hope to gain, though he devoted to study all the energies of a long life. What was thus made accessible to him by a secondary process, by education in the narrower sense, is made accessible to us by a first process, the natural learning of our mother tongue. All that English could do for him it can do for us. It were vain to deny that true and high culture is within reach of him who rightly studies the English lan-

guage alone, knowing naught of any other. More of the fruits of knowledge are deposited in it and in its literature than one man can make his own. History affords at least one illustrious example, within our own near view, of a people that has risen to the loftiest pinnacle of culture with no aid from linguistic or philological study : it is the Greek people. The elements, the undeveloped germs of the Greek civilization, did indeed in part come from foreign sources : but they did not come through literature ; they were gained by personal intercourse. To the true Greek, from the beginning to the end of Grecian history, every tongue save his own was barbarous, and unworthy of his attention ; he learned such, if he learned them at all, only for the simplest and most practical ends of communication with their speakers. No trace of Latin, or Hebrew, or Egyptian, or Assyrian, or Sanskrit, or Chinese was to be found in the curriculum of the Athenian student, though dim intimations of valuable knowledge reached by some of those nations, of noble works produced by them, had reached his ear. What the ancient Greek could do, let it not be said that the modern speaker of English, with a tongue into which have been poured the treasures of all literature and science, from every part of the world, and from times far beyond the dawn of Grecian history, cannot accomplish.

We must be careful, however, not to hurry from this to the conclusion that there is no longer good ground for our studying any language save our own. We have, rather, only to draw one or two negative inferences. In the first place, that we must not contemn the man who knows no other language than his own as lacking the essentials of culture, since he may have derived from his English what is an equivalent, or more than an equivalent, for all the strange tongues we have at command. In the second place, that our inducement to study Latin and Greek, or any other such tongue, is very different from that which

should lead our imagined Polynesian or African to study English. At the revival of letters, indeed, the classical tongues stood toward those of modern Europe in something such a position as one of the latter now to the Polynesian or African dialects; they contained the treasures of knowledge and culture, which were only attainable through them; hence, they were the almost exclusive means of discipline; to study them was to learn what was known, and to lay the necessary foundation for further productiveness in every department. The process of change from that condition of things to the present, when the best and most cultivated modern languages are far richer in collected wealth than ever was either the Greek or the Latin, has been a gradual one, accompanying the slow transfusion of the old knowledge into new forms, and its increase by the results of the best thought, the deepest wisdom, and the most penetrating investigation of the past six or eight centuries.

The reasons why we may not imitate the ancient Greek contempt and neglect of foreign tongues are many and various, and sufficiently evident. In brief, our culture has a far wider and stronger basis than that of the Greek, including numerous departments of knowledge of which he had no conception; history, and antiquity, and literature, and language itself, are subjects of study to us in a sense altogether different from what they were to any ancient people; we have learned, moreover, that the roundabout course, through other tongues, to the comprehension and mastery of our own, is the shortest; and we recognize other communities besides ourselves as engaged in the same rapid career of advancement of knowledge, and constantly setting us lessons which we cannot afford to leave unread.

Of these reasons, the last is the most obvious and elementary. Language is primarily a means of communication; and as the possession of our native tongue gives us

him. Our ordinary courses of education, including a variety of subjects and winding up with a degree and an exhibition, are too apt to be regarded as finishing instead of merely inceptive and introductory processes; the graduate feels that he has been disciplined, that his judgment has been once for all trained, and may now be trusted to act as it should: and hence the crudity and emptiness — the vealiness, if we may be permitted the word — of commencement oratory in general; hence, and from other like causes, that flood of talk beyond knowledge with which we, of all communities in the world, perhaps, are most mercilessly deluged. To counteract the tendencies that bring about this state of things, to teach the modesty and reserve of true scholarship, to keep alive the youthful craving for facts, to repress the adult tendency to form opinions by examining and comparing other opinions, should be among the most cherished aims of an education that pretends to be disciplinary. The necessity and the art of thorough and independent investigation, what are the sources of knowledge and how they are to be consulted and used, and that in more than one department — if the pupil's training has not taught him these, it is a failure. Nothing else can give a real possession of truth. For most of what we hold we are obliged to rely upon the authority of others; it is out of our power even to review the processes by which it has been developed from its ultimate sources; but a part of it we must have thus tested, and we must feel ourselves capable of testing the rest, or none of it is our own.

To make anything less than the whole existing and accessible body of human knowledge the groundwork of education, taken in the largest sense, is wholly inadmissible. All that we have received it is our duty to maintain and augment. Every part of it is valuable, capable of conversion to the uses of discipline and of leading to individual culture. Nothing that men know is so bare and dull

that it does not deserve to be kept in mind, extended, and placed in new relations, and that it may not be made productive of valuable fruit. To ask what knowledge is disciplinary is the question of ignorance. The true question to ask is, What kind of discipline does any given knowledge afford, to what does it conduct, what preparation does it itself need in order to be brought profitably into the scheme of education, and what is its value for that general culture which should be the universal possession, or for any one of the departments of special training which have to be shared out among different individuals and classes?

In the light of these considerations, we are prepared for looking to see what part the study of languages and of language is entitled to bear in our systems of education.

And we have first to notice that the acquisition of language is the primary and fundamental step in education. We learn our language, as truly as we learn mathematics or geography; appropriating, by both processes alike, results wrought out by the labors of unnumbered generations. The power of speech is a human capacity, distinctive and indefeasible, like the capacity of art, or the power to devise and use instruments, with both of which, indeed, it stands in essential connection; but every language that exists or has existed is a constituent part of human culture, an institution, gradually elaborated under the pressure of human wants and human circumstances; into its development have been absorbed the slowly gathered fruits of men's thought and experience, not less than into the development of the arts and sciences, only in a more intimate and unconscious manner. It started from rude and humble beginnings, as the simple satisfaction of a social impulse, the desire of men to communicate with one another; just as the child, when he begins to talk, thinks only of conversing with those about him respecting the petty affairs of his childish world, and

does not dream that he is at the same time equipping his mind and soul with an instrument which will enable them to grapple with all the problems of the universe. We do not easily believe that the speech we learn is something made by our predecessors for our benefit, because we are clearly conscious of our own little power over it, to extend, alter, or amend it. But this is simply the token and effect of the infinite littleness of our individual activity, as compared with the mass of all that has been done and is doing by others ; the insignificance of each of our predecessors was like our own ; but the sum of the infinite series of infinitesimals is the substantial product, language. We are ourselves a part of the force that is altering our present speech, and adapting it to the purposes of our successors, and there is no other force whatever in action to that end. He who should come out upon the arena of the nineteenth century equipped only with the English of the eleventh, would be as awkward and helpless as he who should enter into modern battle in the iron panoply of the same period, with lance in rest, and battle-axe slung at saddle-bow ; and our own English will be in the same manner, if not in the same degree, unequal to the needs of the intellectual combatant of eight hundred years hence. And if during the last period no influence has been exercised upon the language which did not proceed from its speakers, so neither in the preceding period, nor in the one before that — and so on, until the very beginning is reached. There is not an item in the whole of human speech which these forces are not demonstrably capable of having produced ; not an item which the enlightened student of language feels compelled, or impelled, to ascribe to any other force.

It was necessary to insist at greater length upon this point, because there exists even in cultivated opinion so much confusion and error in regard to it. Many fail to distinguish between language as an endowment of human

nature, or the power to speak, and language as a developed product and result of this endowment, or the body of words and phrases constituting a given speech. Language is far enough from being reason, or mind, or thought; it is simply an acquired instrumentality without which all these are comparatively impotent, ineffective, and unmanageable gifts. Its acquisition has been one of the very earliest steps in the progress of humanity, and one universally taken, as universally as the production of at least rude tools and weapons, of articles of dress and means of shelter. No human tribe or race has ever been met with which had not been since time immemorial in the traditional possession of as much as this, although many a one has rested with this, and advanced no further.

The part, then, which language plays in the development of each individual is a reflex of that which it has played in the development of the race. It is the beginning and foundation of everything else. It is our introduction to the *macrocosmos* and the *microcosmos*, the world without us and the world within us. Life and its surroundings are present before the sense of the young child now as before that of the earliest speechless human beings; but they are a bewildering phantasmagoria, into the understanding of which he has to work himself, as they did. In all the exercises of his nascent powers, he is led on and assisted by his fellows, mainly in and through language. With words are taught distinctions, classifications, abstractions, relations; through them observation is directed to the matters most calling for attention; through them consciousness is awakened and exercised, and the reasoning powers are trained; and he who has only learned to talk has fairly begun his education, outer and inner.

While thus the first installment of our indebtedness for culture to the past and the present, language is the principal means of all the rest. It puts us in communication with our fellows, and makes our growth an integral part

access to other minds, so the acquisition of more languages widens our sphere of intercourse, lays open additional sources of enlightenment, and increases the number of our instructors. Even were it possible that everything valuable that was produced abroad should find its way into English, it would yet be more promptly and better studied in the form in which it originally appeared. No one can claim to have ready access to the fountains of knowledge nowadays who has it only by the channel of his native speech.

The important bearing of the study of foreign languages and literatures upon that of our own is also universally recognized. It has become a trite remark, that no one knows his own tongue who knows no other beside it. Our native language is too much a matter of unreflective habit with us for us to be able to set it in the full light of an objective study. Something of the same difficulty is felt in relation also to our native literature; we hardly know what it is and what it is worth, until we come to compare it with another. No doubt this difficulty admits of being measurably removed by other means; but the easiest and most effective means is philological study. This supplies us the needed ground of comparison, and brings characteristic qualities to our conscious apprehension; nothing else so develops the faculty of literary criticism, and leads to that skilled and artistic handling of our mother tongue which is the highest adornment of a natural aptitude, and is able even in no small degree to supply the place of this. He whose object it is to wield effectively the resources of his own vernacular can account no time lost which he spends, under proper direction, in the acquisition of other tongues. Nothing else, again, so trains the capacity to penetrate into the minds and hearts of men, to read aright the records of their opinion and action, to get off one's own point of view and see and estimate things as others see

them. Those who would understand and influence their fellows, those who deal with dogma and precedent, with the interpretation and application of principles that affect man most nearly, must give themselves to studies of which philology is a chief means and aid.

When it comes, however, to the question of deeper investigations into human history, in all its branches, then the necessity of a philology that reaches far beyond the boundaries of English becomes at every turn most clearly apparent. No part of our modern culture — language, literature, or anything else — has its roots in itself, or is to be comprehended without following it up through the records of its former phases. The study of history, as accessible especially in languages and literatures (in a far less degree in art and antiquities), has become one of the principal divisions of human labor. No small part of our most precious knowledge has been won in it, and has been deposited in our own tongue, even entering to a certain extent into that unconscious culture which we gain we hardly know whence or how. But while its results are thus accessible even in English, so far as may serve the purposes of general culture to one whose special activity is to be exerted in a different direction, that kind of thorough mastery which has been described above as needed to make knowledge disciplinary is not to be won in this manner. How tame and lifeless, for example, is his apprehension of the history of English words who looks out their etymologies in a dictionary, however skillfully constructed, compared with his who reads it in the documents in which it is contained! Again, the general truths of linguistic science, having been once wrought out by the study and comparison of many tongues, are capable of being so distinctly stated, and so clearly illustrated out of the resources of English, as to be made patent to the sense of every intelligent and well-instructed English scholar; yet only he can be said

to have fully mastered them who can bring to them independent and varied illustration from the same data which led to their establishment. And the case is the same with all the elements that make up our civilization; while there is a primitive darkness into which we cannot follow them, they have a long history of development which must be read where it is found written, in the records of the many races through whose hands they have passed on their way to us. The work is far from being yet completely done; an inexhaustible mass of materials still remains to be explored and elaborated; and men have to be trained for the task, not less than for the investigation of material nature.

These are, in brief and imperfect statement, the leading principles by which is to be tested the value of philology in general, and of each particular language, as a means of education. And first, as regards the languages most nearly allied with our own in character and circumstances, namely those of modern Europe, it is to be noted that they are especially our resort as sources of positive knowledge. Yet with certain of them, notably the French and the German, our connections are of the higher and more philosophical as well as of the lower and more practical character. Some of our prominent branches of thought have to be followed up to their roots in the French and German literatures. These, too, are by their beauties and peculiarities fitted to furnish the ground of comparative literary study; and the same advantage is possessed by the structure and usages of the languages themselves — an advantage heightened by the historical relation they sustain to English. Had we nothing else with yet stronger recommendations to apply to, the German and French, especially the former, would answer to us all the essential disciplinary purposes of philological study; as, indeed, to many they are and must be made to answer those purposes. As the case stands,

they are among the indispensable parts of a disciplinary education; he who quits school and enters upon the active work of life without mastering either or both of them cannot claim to have enjoyed the benefit of a liberal training.

The other modern languages stand off around these in ever more distant circles of relation to our education; some challenging a place almost as near; others interesting only the special student of literatures, the professed philologist; yet others, only the special student of languages, the scientific linguist. Each, in its own manner and degree, is worthy to be studied; each has its own contribution to make to that wider foundation of valuable knowledge on which is to be built up the higher culture of the future.

So also with the ancient languages, the extant records of the men of olden time. There is no fragment of such records, from whatever part or period of the world, which has not its claim upon the attention of the present age. And that the claim is recognized is fully attested by the acute and successful attempts which this century has seen made upon the secrets of lost tongues and long-buried monuments. The Egyptian, the Persian, the Ninevitic remains are but the most conspicuous among the many trophies won by the scholarly zeal of our time. A host of languages are now regularly professed in the highest institutions of learning which our ancestors either knew naught of or regarded with something of the contemptuous feeling of the Greeks toward the barbarians. These, too, have their various positions of importance, according to their intrinsic value, or the relations they sustain to our interests. Some, like the Egyptian and Zend, have come down as fragments merely, casting light upon ancient and perished civilizations, or illustrating the interconnections of races. Some, though possessing abundant and valuable literatures, are withdrawn from

our sympathies by their peculiarity of structure, and the isolation of the culture they represent. Such is the Chinese; to the merits and claims of which, however, we are at present far from doing justice. Yet others, in place almost equally remote, are brought near by ties of another kind. Such is the Sanskrit, which, on the score of its literature, its institutions, the people speaking it, is hardly more to us than Chinese; but which has over the latter an immense preponderance as being of our own kith and kin, and also the most primitive and unchanged of the tongues which own a common origin with ours and with those others, in ancient and modern Europe, which most interest us. In all that concerns the history of the development of these tongues, and even the history and science of language in general, it stands preëminent. Hence the prominence it has so suddenly assumed in the systems of higher education. In this country, forty years ago, one who knew aught of it would have been a spectacle; now they are to be counted by hundreds who have found out that to the philologist Sanskrit comes next in importance to Latin and Greek, and who have made some knowledge of it their own.

As from China and India we come westward toward Europe, we meet with languages which are invested with interest as being connected with that grand historic movement whose direct issue is our modern civilization. This, to us, is a consideration outweighing in consequence all others. The history of our own culture, and of the nations which have contributed to it, is, in our apprehension, almost the sum and substance of all history; it is often called outright "universal history," though by a usage that is open to criticism, since it seems too oblivious of the claims of that larger part of mankind who would thus be denied to have had a history. Of the so-called Oriental literatures, the Arabic, especially, owns a subordinate share in this kind of importance, besides that

which belongs to it in other respects, because the Arabs were in some measure middle-men between modern Europe and the classic past. There is another tongue, the Hebrew, akin with the Arabic, whose intimate connection with one of the main elements of our civilization, our religion, might seem to challenge for it a more conspicuous place among our subjects of study than is actually allowed it. But the earliest Christian authorities are Greek, not Hebrew; Christianity passed so soon out of the charge of the Semitic races, that the fathers and founders of our general civilization, the Greeks and Romans, became the founders and Fathers of the Church. Its history was removed from the original Hebrew basis and established on classic ground, and the Hebrew language has not maintained a widely acknowledged practical value; few besides theologians think it necessary to read the Old Testament in its own tongue. The narrow compass and unique character of the literature, and the real remoteness of both language and race from ours, have helped to bring about this result.

We come finally to consider the two classical languages. Here we have not to cast about to discover their peculiar claims upon us; in nearly every department of value of which we have taken note, they stand incontestably first. Thus, especially, in regard to that most significant item of all, the history of our culture. In Greece and Rome are the beginnings of nearly all that we most value. They are like the twin lakes in which the Nile has its origin; the mountain torrents which centre in these, to issue in that majestic stream, are by comparison hardly worth our attention. Our art, science, history, philosophy, poetry — even, as has just been shown, our religion — take their start there. There is, as it were, the very heart of the great past, whose secrets are unlocked by language.

This is the firm and indestructible foundation of the

extraordinary importance attaching to the study of the classical tongues. Nothing that may arise hereafter can interfere with it; Greek and Latin, and the antiquity they depict, must continue the sources of knowledge as to the beginnings of history, and be studied as long as history is studied.

But they have also other advantages, which enhance their title to prominence in education. The Greeks and Romans are, in their intensity of action and influence, the two most wonderful communities which history exhibits. Their literatures, in nearly every department, offer unsurpassed, if not unequaled, models of composition, where vigor of thought, fertility of fancy, and elegance of form are present in equal proportion. And as regards the languages themselves, while we would avoid any controversy touching the relative merits, considered as instruments of human thought, of these and of the most highly cultivated modern tongues, we may at least assert, without fear of contradiction, that the former, the Greek especially, are the most perfect known specimens of the synthetic type of speech — a type through which our own English has passed, on its way to its present condition. Indeed, if we take the suffrages of the great scholars of the world as those of the Greek generals were taken after the battle of Salamis, we shall hardly escape concluding its absolute preëminence, as the superior conduct of Themistocles in that fight; for each one, even if he set his own native speech first, will rank the Greek as clearly second. Between the classical tongues and the English, once more, there exists a direct affiliation. What part of our stores of word and phrase comes directly from the French comes ultimately from the Latin; and, in our resort to the sources, we cannot stop short of the Latin. Another part comes directly from this language and from the Greek; and to the same fountains we habitually resort to satisfy our daily arising needs of expression. The

thorough student of English speech, not less than of English literature and institutions, must go to Greek and Latin for much of his most valuable material.

These are matters too familiar to have required to be touched upon otherwise than lightly. But, great as is their consequence, they do not entirely explain the position given to the classics in our general scheme of disciplinary education. One or two circumstances of a more adventitious character exercise an influence in the same direction. Thus, in the first place, ever since the revival of letters, a considerable share of the best human effort has been given to study of the classics; to their elucidation has been devoted, with lavish expenditure of time and labor, ability of the highest order, acuteness the most penetrating, critical judgment the most sound and mature. An immense store of the results of human thought is deposited in the literature bearing upon them. Every item of classic lore has been so turned over and over, placed in so many lights and reflected in so many minds, that it is, so to speak, instinct with culture. Culture breeds culture; the bare items of knowledge become efficiently cultivating when superior minds have set them in order, combined them, and shown to what they lead. The fruits of this extreme elaboration are visible in every part of the classic field. No other tongues have had their phenomena and laws so exhaustively exhibited; nowhere has the whole life of an ancient people been so laid open to view, in its grand outlines and its minute details. Hence, all students of antiquity have gone to school to classical philology in order to learn how to investigate the past; how, shaking off the clinging prejudices of their modern education, to live with long-gone races as if of them. In this respect, also, the classics are the training-ground of history.

In the second place, there is another way in which culture has tended to breed its like. Classic study still

inherits a little of the feeling of times when it was the exclusive means of a liberal education, when only he who knew Latin and Greek knew anything, and he was most truly learned and cultivated who knew most of them. Classical scholars were long the sole body of educated men; and they yet constitute the most influential and powerful guild of the educated, with perhaps an inkling of a disposition to look down unduly upon those who have not been initiated into their body, and do not know their passwords. In the general opinion, a man is more set down by inability to understand a classical allusion, or directly appreciate the force of a new word from the Latin, than by a betrayal of ignorance on many a topic of more essential consequence. Now it is indeed a matter of great moment to be in intellectual sympathy with those whom we admire, to meet them on common ground, discuss common subjects with them, and fully appreciate what interests them. And from this sympathy is derived a legitimate enhancement of the worth of classical study; only one that is liable to be exaggerated, and perverted to the service of narrow-mindedness and pedantry.

That the value of a study of the classics is by its advocates often put on false grounds and overrated may not be denied; and such error and exaggeration has the natural effect to provoke opposing injustice from the other party. The sooner it is acknowledged that Greek and Latin philology simply forms a branch of general philology, with very special claims to our attention, differing not in kind, but only in degree from those of other branches, and depending on qualities which are in every particular capable of being distinctly defined and exactly weighed, the better will it be for the cause of education, and for harmony among educators. There cannot, as we have already seen, ever come a time when these languages will not occupy a leading place among our disciplinary studies; but as they have long since been cast down from

their former rank as sole means of discipline, so they are still losing ground relatively, and must continue to do so in the future, by the inevitable operation of natural causes. Of their more adventitious recommendations (as we have called them above) they will be measurably stripped, by the rapid accumulation of the results of human labor in other departments of knowledge, and the growing consciousness of strength in the laborers there; while even their most essential merits must slowly fade; for, the more of human history and of human productiveness we leave behind us, the less comparative importance can belong to any particular period of the one, to any particular fruits of the other. So long as education is founded on knowledge, and as knowledge increases, the educational value of each single department and body of knowledge must diminish.

It is instructive to note the change of aspect which classical study has undergone since its uprisal — a change analogous with that which each individual undergoes toward his teachers, toward the whole array of enlightening influences from without. Men went to Greece and Rome at first as the repositories of higher knowledge, for authoritative instruction. Then, as they gained independence of judgment, founded on the possession of what their instructors had known and their own further acquisitions, a new spirit began to show itself, that of criticism. This is the spirit which dominates in all modern philology, in every department. It implies simply that we appeal to the past no longer as an authority, but as a witness; we listen to it with respect, even with reverence, but without obsequiousness, mindful that no witness is implicitly to be trusted, and that the truth is to be won only by cross-examination and the confrontation of testimonies. We take no man's dictum on any point without questioning his right to give it; we strive to put ourselves in his position and see from his point of view, in order to understand

him, and estimate what he says at its real value. This is *skepticism*, in the good, etymological sense of the term, the determination to *see* with our own eyes whatever lies within our sphere of sight, instead of letting others see for us. Familiar examples of its effects are to be seen in our treatment of the traditional history of early Rome, to credit which is now as rare as to doubt it was rare a century or two since; and in our discussions of the personality of Homer, which we recognize as a point not to be settled by the opinion of antiquity, but through the most penetrating study of the Homeric poems, along with an investigation of the conditions under which like works have appeared elsewhere.

In the strictest accordance, now, with this distinctive spirit of modern philology is the whole spirit of modern science, so called. The latter recognizes all culture as founded on the basis of positive knowledge, all knowledge as valuable, and observation and deduction as the only means of arriving at knowledge. And it applies itself to examining those same sources of knowledge to which men in all ages have had recourse, questioning them with such success as they could command. It rests contented with no opinion or conclusion standing on a foundation that admits of being widened and deepened. Hence the busy observation and experimentation, the collection of facts, the inductions, generalizations, combinations, inferences, applications, with which the world now teems; hence the springing up of one new science after another. In all this there is no materialism and utilitarianism, in any bad sense of those words; command of the forces of nature and their reduction to the service of man's well-being do, indeed, result from it at a rate far beyond what other times have known; but this is an accompanying advantage, and a signal one. The higher utilities rest upon the lower, and grow out of them. There need not be, and is not, less of the pure love of knowledge and of all its

loftier uses in the study of nature than in that of human history; nor is the truth reached by the former of a different kind of value, or less expanding to the mind. The enlargement of the whole groundwork and structure of cultivated thought brought about by modern astronomy geology, and chemistry, is greater than could have been effected by the old philosophy in as many thousands of years as these have lived centuries. The dignity of a branch of study does not depend upon the nature of what it deals with, but is proportioned in part to its utility, in part to the quality of work requisite for it, the amount and style of its necessary preparation, and the degree of ability demanded for its successful pursuit. The man who fails to understand and value science is not less a specialist, and of defective culture, than he who cannot appreciate philology, or history, or philosophy.

Nothing, therefore, can well be more unfortunate for the cause of education than that misunderstanding should prevail between the representatives of two departments of study so nearly agreeing in both object and method, which are not antagonistic, and hardly even antithetical, but rather supplementary, to one another; nothing sadder than to hear, on the one hand, the works of man decried as a subject of study compared with the works of God, as if the former were not also the works of God, or as if the latter concerned us, or were comprehensible by us, except in their relation to us; or, on the other hand, to hear utility depreciated and facts sneered at, as if utility were not merely another name for value, or as if there were anything to oppose to facts save fictions. Men may dispute as to which is the foremost; but it is certain that these are the two feet of knowledge, and that to hamper either is to check the progress of culture. Each has its undesirable tendencies, which the influence of the other must help to correct; the one makes for over-conservatism, the other for over-radicalism; the one is apt to inspire a

too credulous trust to authority, the other an overweening self-confidence, a depreciation of even rightful authority, a contempt for the past and its lessons. Both alike have an imperative claim to our attention, and upon their due combination must rest the system of education, if it would be indeed disciplinary.

Into the more practical question of what constitutes their due combination we do not here enter, having undertaken to speak only of some of the principles that underlie its settlement. What part of philological training shall be given through the English, the other modern tongues, or the ancient; how we are to avoid cram, and give that which, instead of obstructing or nauseating, creates the capacity and the desire for more; how to adjust the details of a proper compromise between the general and the special discipline and culture — these are matters demanding the most careful consideration, and sure to lead to infinite discussion, since upon them the differences of individual taste, capacity, and circumstance must occasion wide diversities of opinion.

In conclusion, we will only repeat that those differences themselves have to be fully allowed for in our systems; that we may not cut out too strait-laced a scheme of study, to be forced upon all minds; that in an acknowledged course of compromise and selection it were foolish to exact uniformity; that we should beware how much we pronounce indispensable, and how we allow ourselves to look down upon any one unversed in what our experience has taught us to regard as valuable, since he may have gained from something else that we are ignorant of an equal or greater amount of discipline and enlightenment. Let us, above all things, have that wisdom which consists in knowing how little we know; and, as its natural consequence, the humility and charity which shall lead us to estimate at its utmost value, and to respect, what is known by our fellow.

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